

The Relevance of Mother Tongue Instruction for Kurdish Refugee Parents

*A Comparative Case Study of
Oslo and Gothenburg*

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Abstract

This study explores the relevance of mother tongue instruction for primary school children from a user-perspective, i.e. Kurdish refugee parents living in Oslo, Norway and Gothenburg, Sweden. The overarching purpose of the study is to provide a constructionist understanding of what constitutes the relevance of mother tongue instruction, understood as valued learning outcomes. In light of this, the study aims to elucidate what language functions and societal institutions Kurdish refugee parents value and associate the Kurdish language with. In so doing, the study also seeks to uncover factors that influence perceptions of relevance. These aims are to be addressed through a comparative case study design that consists of in-depth couples interviews. The aim of the study's comparative aspect is to provide an understanding of whether or not this relevance can be perceived differently in different contexts

The findings suggest that the perception of MTI relevance is closely related to the value that the Kurdish language is perceived to have for the parents and the children's family and community domains in Oslo/Gothenburg and Iran/Iraq. That is, a value pertaining to social and emotional interaction, Kurdish social identity construction, Kurdish literacy and second language learning. In light of the theoretical frameworks of Joshua Fishman and Pierre Bourdieu's theories, the findings however suggest that the Kurdish language is perceived to be a threatened language as its functions and domains are restricted; and are believed to be even more restricted in the younger generation's lives in Norway and Sweden.

The primary responsibility and most significant condition for the maintenance of these valued aspects of Kurdish language use are perceived to be reliant on the efforts of the family domain. Thus, MTI is believed to be a contributory support for the families' efforts as long as the instruction is based on a maintenance bilingual model. Moreover, the findings suggest a call for a societal situation of bilingualism with diglossia, whereby there exists societal acceptance and arrangements for the protection and maintenance of the Kurdish language's usage in private domains.

However, the predominantly monolingual discourses in the Norwegian and Swedish language policies suggest that the realization of these desired situations may be challenging as they foster minority language shift, rather than minority language maintenance and cultivation.

Preface

This thesis has been a personal journey for me, from the first moment when I chose the topic until... Well, they do say that one will never be able to truly finish a thesis. In my encounters with parents who speak the language of my childhood, the language of my parents and the language of my beloved grandparents with whom I treasure beautiful memories; I have made many reflections about what the Kurdish language means to me and what position it will have in my future life as a mother.

On a rainy evening in my student apartment, my partner and I had a conversation about Aneta Pavlenko's theory of language emotionality. Born in Australia, his father is Greek and his Argentinian mother has Hungarian ancestry. Despite this mix, he has long ago accepted and embraced the English language as his mother tongue. I, on the other hand, realized during our conversation that I am experiencing a language shift. After reading Pavlenko and having a conversation about children in particular, I started to mourn what I felt to be a loss of my mother tongue as I realized that in our future family, I would not be able to maintain the language with which I associate so many dearly loved memories. This is due to my Kurdish language being too broken to be fixed in time for my children's need for a strong foundation in their first language. My ever so optimistic partner tried to remind me of all the positive and enriching aspects that the English and Norwegian languages will have for me and us in the future. I realize, in light of his words and the theories that I have read during the journey of this thesis that it is not a question of what I am losing, but rather what I will be gaining. I guess, in the end, it is about being willing to embrace the future.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the parents who shared their insights and experiences with me. Without you, this study would not have been realized. Moreover, I would like to thank my loving family and friends who have provided me with undivided support throughout this challenging task, you have made this journey beautiful and fun.

Last, but not least, I would like to grant a great Thank You to my supervisor, Kristin Vold Lexander. Your support, positivity and knowledge has, and will continue to inspire me in my future work within this field.

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1 Introduction

Migration is an inevitable fact of our human existence. Ever since the first people left the African continent in search of better lives for themselves and their families, people have been migrating to new regions of the world. Some are forced into such life-changing decisions due to political persecution, war, or environmental disasters. Others are pulled by attractive opportunities in new settlements. Upon entering their new lives in their new countries of residence, many of these individuals meet a new language, a language to which they often need to adapt in order to integrate with the larger society. Often, the mother tongue of these individuals becomes a minority language in the face of their new environments. Given these contextual realities, what relevance will these individuals' mother tongue have to them when it becomes a minority language? More importantly, what relevance can the mother tongue have to these individuals' children who are born and raised in these new environments?

Migration stipulates linguistic diversity and throughout the world, scholars and politicians have been interested in how this diversity can be approached. Researchers within the field of education have made no exception. Over the past four decades, educational scholars have investigated the "role of schooling in the context of linguistic diversity" (Martin-Jones, 2007, p. 172). Some of these researchers have focused on the national language policies whereby they have elucidated the connection between language and national unity (Hornberger & Ricento, 1996; Hornberger 2006; Ricento, 2000; 2006; Heller, 2007). Other scholars have been interested in the individual perspectives of immigrants whereby the role of language instruction for social and individual identity has been explored (Cummins; 1996; Heller, 1999; Norton Pierce, 2000; Day, 2002; Flores-Crespo, 2007). In the end, all of these educational studies have focused on the topic of minority languages and their speakers within their historically and politically embedded educational contexts. This study aims to provide a contribution to this field of studies through a comparative case study of the perceptions of one particular immigrant group, i.e. Kurdish refugee parents living in Oslo, Norway and Gothenburg, Sweden.

These individuals have escaped the constraints of political persecution and constructed new lives for themselves and their families in these two Scandinavian cities. This study presents their hopes, concerns and understandings of what constituted the relevance of their children learning their mother tongue in public schools in their new diaspora contexts. Ultimately, this

study is a study of language ideologies, that is, a study of “the beliefs, feelings and conceptions about language structure and use which [...] index the [educational] interest of individual speakers” (Kroskrity cited in Martin-Jones et. al., 2012, p. 118). The purpose of this study is thus to provide a constructionist understanding of what constitutes the relevance of mother tongue instruction (henceforth MTI) from the user perspective of Kurdish refugee parents (henceforth K.r.p). By comparing the two groups of K.r.p. who live in the two different contexts, this study aims to provide an understanding of whether or not the relevance of MTI can be perceived differently in different educational contexts. The subsequent research questions will be guiding the investigation.

Research question 1:

How do Kurdish refugee parents perceive the relevance of MTI in Kurdish for their primary school children?

Within the framework of a capability based understanding of relevance, this question will guide the investigation of what constitutes valued learning outcomes of MTI for K.r.p.

1a. *What learning outcomes do the parents perceive to be valuable and achievable through MTI?*

This research question will guide the investigation of for *what* the parents believe learning and using the Kurdish language can be relevant in their children’s lives.

1b. *Within which social institutions in their children’s lives do the parents perceive the use of the Kurdish language as to be relevant?*

This research question will guide the investigation of for *where* the parents believe that the use of the Kurdish language can be relevant in their children’s lives.

Research question 2:

What factors influence the parents’ perceptions regarding these matters?

Finally, this research question will guide the investigation of *why* the parents perceive the relevance of these matters the way they do.

In *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language*’s first-ever special issue with an explicit focus on Kurdish language, the editors state the following:

“Kurdish is visibly missing in the growing literature on the sociology of language and sociolinguistics even though in recent years research [...] has been published in books, dissertations and disparate journal articles” (Hassanpour, Sheyholislami & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012, p. 1).

This statement provides a picture of the neglect of the Kurdish language within the field of sociolinguistics. The same picture can, unfortunately, be painted within the field of education as only one substantial and extensive educational study could be found that has focused on Kurdish people in particular (Jonsdottir, 2012). That is, Ingimar Jonsdottir's comparative study of Kurdish and Norwegian parents' educational expectations and involvements.

Thus, this study presents the perspectives of a group of individuals that have otherwise been granted little attention within the educational field. Furthermore, the study can contribute to the general knowledge specter on minority families living in Norway. This topic was recently requested in a Norwegian policy document on diversity, which states that there is a general need for more research and in-depth knowledge about families from various immigrant minority groups (St.meld. 2012-2013), including Kurdish families. Also, there is a general lack of studies conducted in Norway with an explicit focus on MTI. The few that have been conducted have either had a focus on issues concerning classroom instruction and bilingual models (Myklebust, 1993; Bezemer, et.al. 2004), or on the academic achievements of students who have attended MTI classes (Bakken, 2007). To my knowledge, there is also a lack of Norwegian and Swedish studies that investigate MTI from the perspectives of parents.

The terms minority and majority language can be understood in different ways. In this study, these terms will be understood in light of each other within a national context whereby minority language will be used to refer to a language that has fewer speakers than the predominant, national majority language.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The current chapter has presented the study's background and its purpose. Chapter two will consist of a literature review of the literature that pertain to the study's two main topics; that is, relevance and MTI. Chapter three provides an account of the study's analytical framework and theories; while chapter four will be concentrated on the contextual background of the study-sites and the study's participants. Chapter five will present the methodological aspects of the study; while chapter six will provide an account of the findings from the investigations. Finally, chapter seven will consist of a summary of the major findings, discussions of these and a final conclusion.

2 Literature review

MTI has commonly been studied within the field of bilingual/multilingual education. However, the innumerable studies related to this subject have not been limited to this field. As with other educational phenomena, studies of MTI have been performed across a wide range of disciplines, making the topic of bilingual education and MTI an inter-disciplinary topic. One of the major fields in which MTI has been the interest of study, is sociolinguistics. Whereby the topic has been approached through various disciplines of this overarching scientific area, that is, psycholinguistics, linguistic anthropologists and language policy studies. Moreover, the topic has been studied at various levels, that is, from international and national macro levels of policy development; to local mezzo levels of institutions and communities, as well as at the micro level of individual stakeholders. These levels and approaches to MTI have again been investigated through various scientific methods from quantitative and qualitative strategies. All in all, these various studies have broadened the range of knowledge of the topic of MTI. The topic of relevance, however, seems to have been granted less explicit attention than MTI, particularly within the field of education.

The aim of this chapter is to account for some of the major trends within some central academic fields, so as to define this particular study's scientific framework. Also, the chapter will provide an account of where there is a research gap on this study's central topics.

2.1 Educational relevance and MTI

The notion of 'Relevance' has been implicitly discussed in the educational literature. To my knowledge, there seems to be no educational theories that elucidate this phenomenon in depth. However, some scientific work exists, which generally focuses on education in low-income countries. It seems that the notion of relevance has been particularly central in such studies over the past five decades.

In 1991, Beatrice Avalos (1991), for example, approached this concept in her research on education in less developed countries. Avalos argues that by relating relevance to potential, that is, "what it is assumed a person will do in his or her future life in society and the need to prepare her specifically for that" (op.cit., p. 425); policy-makers in these contexts justify their limited investments in education for the poor. With a critical theory approach, Avalos

proposed a reconceptualization of educational relevance with a guiding principle of “the degree to which it enables the learner, on the strength of development of competencies and practical understanding, to act in ways which will further such changes in his environment as are personally significant and significant for his or her people” (p. 432). Avalos thus proposed a move from conceptualizing educational relevance as preparations for participation in the labor market, to preparation and empowerment for social participation and individual reflection.

Over the last two decades, the term has also come to be associated with ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ (Ladson-Billings, 2001) where the focus has been on how educators can cater for culturally, linguistically and socially diverse classrooms; through pedagogical approaches that make the curriculum more individually relevant. In this context, relevance has been approached from a pedagogical perspective.

In recent years, Leon Tikly and Angela M. Barrett (2011) have discussed the notion within the frameworks of Amartya Sen’s capability approach (Sen, 1992; 2001; Dreze and Sen, 1995). Their focus is also on the context of low-income countries whereby they underline the importance of relevance for good quality education. With this approach, they define the phenomenon as “the extent to which learning outcomes are meaningful for all learners [and] valued by their communities” (2011, p.10). They argue that relevance in education is “fundamentally concerned with developing those capabilities and functionings, which, individuals [...] have reason to value” (ibid). This approach has provided a normative framework that relates educational processes to human well-being, both at an individual level as well as at the societal levels; as it allows for a conceptualization of relevance in education in terms of individual needs and values. In this sense, the phenomenon allows for a interpretive approach to educational issues in that it allows for a micro-level analysis of why, how, where and what education particular individuals find important and valuable for various aspects of their lives. Thus, the question of relevance becomes a question of for *whom* and for *what*.

This concept can thus be applied to any study with a constructionist approach, including those concerned with MTI. Pedro Flores-Crespo (2007) and Brian Maddox (2008) have applied this understanding in their capability based approach to language and literacy. However, there seems to be no other studies that explicitly focus on the issue of education and first language learning through a relevance perspective. This suggests a significant gap in the broad

literature on MTI which is revealed with the concept of relevance. To my knowledge, no studies have attempted to provide an integrated understanding of MTI that captures the sum of all the various positive elements of such instruction, which together constitute its broad-ranging relevance. This study attempts to fill this gap by applying Tikly and Barrett's capability based understanding of relevance to the investigation of MTI from a user perspective.

2.2 Academic approaches to MTI as a form of bilingual education

MTI can be understood as a form of bilingual education. None of these educational phenomena are however straightforward, but rather complex and ambiguous. During the 1960s and 1970s when the structural-functionalist view dominated this field; writers approached this phenomenon through investigations of 'models', a view which has now become a well-established approach. True to this tradition, Colin Baker (2006) explains bilingual education as to be either a) education that uses and promotes two languages in classrooms where formal instruction fosters bilingualism, or b) education for language minority children that is relatively monolingual and does not foster bilingualism in the curriculum (p. 213). Moreover, Baker explains that one can understand the types of bilingual education in terms of their educational aims, whereby the *transitional* model and the *maintenance* model (op.cit. p. 213) are two varieties. Their characteristics are summarized in the following table which is a combination of Baker (2006, p. 215) and Nancy Hornberger's typologies of bilingual education varieties.

Table 1 Typology of bilingual education varieties.

Type of program	Language of the Classroom	Societal and Educational Goals	Linguistic Goals
Transitional	Moves from minority to majority language	Cultural and linguistic assimilation Subtractive language development	Relative monolingualism Language shift
Maintenance/ Heritage Language	Bilingual with emphasis on first language	Pluralism Strengthened cultural identity Additive language development	Bilingualism and biliteracy Language maintenance

The transitional model aims to shift minority language children's use of their first language (L1) to the dominant, majority language. For this program, the ultimate societal and

educational aim is assimilation of language minority children, while the language outcome aim is monolingualism. This is achieved through subtractive language development where minority language students' second language is strengthened and cultivated while the use of their first language is gradually decreased and left uncultivated and unrecognized in the educational domain. Precisely because of these aims, this program has faced much opposition from various fields. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), for example, asserts that it fosters linguistic genocide and breaches basic human rights.

The latter program, *maintenance*, aims to “foster the minority language in the child, strengthening the child’s sense of cultural identity and affirming the rights of an ethnic minority group in a nation” (op.cit., p. 213). The term *heritage language*, which refers to the language “that is often used at or inherited from home and that is different from the language used in mainstream society” (Weiyun He, 2012, p. 587), is used as the medium of instruction. The societal and educational aim of this program is minority language maintenance and language pluralism and enrichment. In terms of the language outcome aims, the maintenance program fosters functional bilingualism¹ and biliteracy through additive language development; where the minority language students learn a second language “at no cost to their first language” (op.cit., p. 4.). Over the past two decades, a wide support for this particular program has grown within various fields. As nation-states have become more linguistically diverse, educational scholars have called for bilingual maintenance programs that reflect and cater for linguistic diversity. One of the advocates of this program is Joshua Fishman (1972; 1991) who, since the 1970s, has stressed the importance of minority language maintenance and bilingualism through additive language development.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a predominantly cognitive approach to bilingualism (Vygotsky, 1986) and bilingual education. The perhaps most significant psycholinguistic works within this approach are the writings of James Cummins (1979) and Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert (1972).

¹ A state of being functionally able to make use of one's reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in two languages across various social settings (Özerk 2008, p. 112) and having adequate proficiency in two languages for a) communicative purposes, b) as a tool for thinking and learning and, c) for the experience of belonging and identity (Engen 2004, p. 48).

James Cummins' theory: *the developmental interdependence hypothesis*² (1979) was an important contribution to the ways in which bilingualism was perceived in the field of bilingual education in the 1970s. At the time, the prevalent belief amongst scholars was that a mismatch between the language of the home and the language of the school would result in cognitive confusion and academic impedance for bilingual children – a notion which was referred to as the *linguistic mismatch hypothesis* (Cummins 1979, p. 223). Cummins dismissed this belief and he argued that due to an interdependence between the development of bilingual children's L1 and L2, a strong foundation in L1 could result in high competence in L2.

Gardner and Lambert's theories of *language attitudes* is more concerned with the connection between motivation and second language acquisition (1972). They identified what they categorized as the determining factors that predict language-learning achievements, i.e. *integrative* and *instrumental* language attitudes (op.cit.). Instrumental language attitudes, they explain, are held by individuals who want to learn a language so as to use it for practical purposes, such as attaining a job and other self-advancement efforts. Accordingly, this attitude can be regarded as a pragmatic understanding of language learning. Integrative language attitude is described as to be held by individuals who believe that learning a language will help to identify and integrate with members of a specific language group. As a result, it is identity-based due to its underlying understanding of language as an essential medium for social identity construction.

During the 1960s and 1970s, these two theories, along with other writings within the structural-functionalist view, were applied to so-called achievement studies that focused on cognitive and L2 acquisition outcomes from attending bilingual programs (Peal and Lambert 1962; Toukoma & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977). At the time, the general approach to bilingual education was mainly policy-driven, whereby one was interested in assessing the effectiveness of bilingual models (Martin-Jones, 2007). This view has to some degree persisted, as it is still central in the 'management' paradigm (Blommaert & Verchueren, 1998) within the language policy and planning approach to bilingual education (Hyltenstam & Tuomela 1996; Axelsson, Lennartsson-Hokkanen & Sellgren, 2002 in Sweden; Bakken 2003; Lindman, 2008 in Norway). This is despite the cognitive approach with its structural-

² Cummins did not base his theory on studies he had performed himself. He, did however, apply evidence from previous studies to support his assumptions, arguments and finally his hypothesis. For a full list of the studies that were employed see Cummins, (1979).

functional view, having been faced with strong criticism. Studies like those of Cummins as well as Gardner and Lambert's are regarded as outdated due to their narrow cognitive focus, and disregard for cultural, social and political processes (Rivera, 1984; Edelsky 1991 on Cummins' theory; Norton Pierce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2002 on Gardner and Lambert's theory). Cummins has attempted to address these issues in later years (2000).

Towards the 1980s, scholars working within the sociolinguistic field became more concerned with the social space of language acquisition and language use (Foucault, 1972; Fishman, 1972; Bakhtin, 1986; Fairclough, 1989). One became more interested in the "new epistemological spaces opened up by developments in social theory, notably the turn towards post-structuralism, postmodernism and critical theory" (Martin-Jones & Gardner, 2012, p. 2). With a strong influence from the critical theory thinkers (Bourdieu, 1990; 1991; Gramsci, 1988; Foucault, 1970; 1972; 1979; Habermas, 1979; 1985; 1986), educational scholars approached the topic of bilingual education through a constructionist and interpretive perspective that critically evaluated the link between the educational institution and the reproduction of legitimate language. One of the most significant studies within this approach is Monica Heller's (1999) ethnographic study of a French-language minority school in Ontario, Canada. Joshua Fishman's research on language maintenance and reversing language shift in diaspora contexts (1972; 1991) have also been significant contributions to the interpretive constructionist approach.

During the late 1980s and the 1990s, the sociolinguistic studies on bilingual education also became more ethnographically orientated and influenced by the field of linguistic anthropology (c.f. Taylor, 1985; Ochs 1993; Schieffelin, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000; Norton Pierce, 1995; 2000; Heller; 1999). This approach became, and is still, highly central within the field as it allows researchers to 'see the analysis of small phenomena as set against an analysis of big phenomena' (Martin-Jones, Blackledge & Creese, 2012, p. 12). Thus, by combining micro-level analyses of the connection between language and identity, with investigations of the cultural, economical and political conditions of educational institutions; since the 1990s educational scholars have critically evaluated the relations of social reproduction and domination through a critical ethnographic lens.

One of the significant contributors to the ethnographic approach to sociolinguistics in education, is Elinor Ochs (1988; 1993; Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin; 2012) who has provided an understanding of the connection between language use and social identity as a process of

socialization whereby the family domain and the educational domains play important roles. Within these domains of socialization, Ochs has established that understandings of what constitutes socially recognized verbal behavior and verbal display of attitudes influence the way social identities are constructed, and constantly negotiated in various complex social spaces. Some Norwegian and Swedish studies have employed this understanding in their ethnographic approaches to language and identity: Tove Bull (2003, 2004) has investigated the situation of the Sámi language; Veslemøy Rydland and Vibeke G. Aukrust (2008) have investigated how Turkish pre-school children reveal their identity through language use in schools; and Åsa Wedin (2012) has investigated how asylum-seeking children in Sweden negotiate, construct and manifest their identities through literacy in schools.

Aneta Pavlenko (2005; with Dewaele 2001-2004) is yet another major contributor to the field of ethnographic studies in sociolinguistics as she has provided a unique perspective of the subjective and emotional aspects of language acquisition and language use (cf. Dewaele 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; Piller 2002; Pavlenko 2002; 2004; 2005). Although Pavlenko's studies have not had an instructional focus, they provide a subjective perspective of the emotional factors that influence the connection between how parents living in diaspora contexts perceive their languages, and the way they use them within their immediate family domains. Thereby Pavlenko has established, through ethnographic accounts, the emotional factors which explain the importance of L1 for intergenerational communication in the family domain.

Brian Street's (1984; 1993; 1995) contributions to re-conceptualizations of 'literacy' during the 1980s is another example of significant ethnographic works. Brian's studies on 'literacy practices' within the New Literacy Studies (Street, 2003) approach has broken with the 'causal' conceptions (e.g. Olsen & Torrance, 2001) of literacy as an autonomous, delivery and skill-based means for cognitive and social change for the illiterate. Instead, Brian advocated a socially sensitive, ideological and ethnographic approach to literacy; that focuses on power relations and hegemony: an approach that has become predominant in the field of bilingual education. Moreover, it has provided a more general foundation for understanding literacy practices as social instances whereby "people's identities mediate and are mediated by the texts they read, write and talk about" (Birrell & Luke, 2011, p. 416).

In addition to the topics of identity, emotions and literacy, the notion of language ideologies (Fairclough, 2001; Schieffelin, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000) has become more relevant in the anthropologically oriented educational studies. Kroskrity defines this to be "beliefs, feelings

and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political interest of individual speakers, ethnic or other interest groups, and nation states” (cited in Martin-Jones et. al., 2012, p. 118). With its ethnographic foundation, language ideology studies have critically investigated the micro-level processes of language ideology formation against the macro-level processes of nation-state ideologies and discourse. Central to these investigations is the analysis of language policy and planning (LPP) (Haugen, 1959; Hornberger & Ricento, 1996; Hornberger, 2006; Ricento, 2000; 2006). With the influences of Michel Foucault (1970; 1972; 1979) and Norman Fairclough (1989), LPP studies have been concerned with policy discourse analyses that elucidate the macro-level relations of power and domination in and through written texts. Ultimately, educational scholars have used the LPP analysis to critically evaluate how the institutional provision of how bilingual education is used to frame relations of hegemony, domination and reproduction of power; which in turn, affects and is affected by the micro-level processes of identity development and language use.

In the 1980s, this approach contributed to the break with the late 20th century’s discourse of ‘one-nation, one language’ and monolingualism, as educational scholars became critically concerned with the significant role of language in centralized nation-building; by which Heller (1991) argues the notion of ‘linguistic minority’ is defined (Martin-Jones, Blackledge & Creese, 2012). The ethnographic LPP approach has persisted in the field. For example, Heller’s study (1999) is a critical ethnographic study that, through a constructionist account of the language ideologies of individual minority group-members, has contributed to the volume of critical studies that broke with the monolingual discourse of the latter half of the 20th century (Martin-Jones et.al., p. 2). Some educational scholars in Sweden and Norway have adopted this approach. For example, Swedish professor Sally Boyd has investigated the connection between language policy and language use in multilingual suburbs (& Huss 2001; 2007; 2011), while Joron Pihl (2001; 2009; 2010) and Thor Ola Engen (1994; & Solstad 2004; & Kulbrandstad 2004) have focused on political discourses related to inclusion, bilingual education and special needs education in Norway.

Since the 1980s, growing transnational flows, the all-encompassing processes of Globalization and the growing position of the English language in local countries have resulted in new research contexts that are socially, culturally and linguistically diverse. This development and the persisting post-structural and ethnographic perspectives have contributed to the reconceptualization of some of the central notions within the field of

bilingual education and sociolinguistics. In the 21st century, educational scholars are focused on capturing the complexities in what Steven Vertovec (2007) has referred to as an area of ‘super-diversity’ where the notions of fixed and autonomous entities of language, identity, literacy, community or culture are out-dated. Consequently, a multilevel approach has been advocated and a focus has been placed on capturing the complex nature of heteroglossia, ‘speech events’, ‘literacy practices’, ‘language varieties’ and ‘identity as constantly negotiable’ (Martin-Jones et.al, 2012, p. 4). As a result, the term ‘bilingualism’ has been replaced by ‘multilingualism’ and ‘diversity’, which captures the complexity in individual speakers’ linguistic repertoires and realities.

Although the volume of studies related to bilingual education and MTI is extensive, there seems to be a gap in these studies as they, to my knowledge, do not cover the language ideologies that index the educational interests of Kurdish people in particular. As previously mentioned the only educational study that was found to have concentrated on the Kurdish population is a dissertation by Ingimar Jonsdottir (2012). This study is an attempt to fill this gap through a constructionist comparative case study of how the relevance of MTI is perceived by Kurdish refugee parents.

3 Analytical framework

This chapter presents the theories that constitute the study's analytical and theoretical frameworks. Section 3.1 provides an account of the understanding that has been adopted for the notion of relevance. Section 3.2 consists of an account of (a) Joshua Fishman's theories language maintenance, language shift and reversing language shift (1972; 1991) which will be applied as one of the study's theoretical frameworks, and (b) the theoretical categories that will guide the analysis of the data. Finally, section 3.3, provides an account of the study's second theoretical framework, which is the conflict theory perspective of Pierre Bourdieu (1986; 1990; 1991).

3.1 Conceptualizing relevance

Initially, Amartya Sen's capability approach (cf. Sen, 1992; 2001; Dreze and Sen, 1995; Nussbaum, 2003; Robeyns, 2003; 2006; Saito, 2003; Unterhalter, 2003; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007) was to be applied to the study. Sen is considered to be one of the twentieth century's greatest contributors to the ways in which human well-being and social arrangements are evaluated and assessed. His capability approach, that has at its center the notions of freedom, capabilities and equality, has had a great impact within the field of education, as several writers³ have dedicated great attention to examining the relationship between it and education⁴. The advantage of this approach lies in its normative framework that relates educational processes to human well-being, both at an individual level as well as at the societal levels. However, after the collection of the data, it was decided that the capability approach would not be applied to this study. Instead, an integrative sociolinguistically based approach was adopted.

The primary reason for opting away the capability approach was that it is relatively new and, to my knowledge, has not been applied to studies within the field of bilingual education in particular. On the basis of the diversity in the findings which reflected a range of topics from several sub-disciplines within the wider sociolinguistic field, it was found that opting for the

³ Cf. Walker & Unterhalter (2007), Nussbaum (2003), Robeyns (2003; 2006), Saito (2003) and Unterhalter (2003).

⁴ Despite a general acceptance of Sen's approach, Saito (2003) has criticized it for not being applicable to children as it is problematic to discuss what capabilities children want due to them not being mature enough to make decisions about what kind of lives they want to lead.

capability approach would complicate an integration of all these elements under one overarching framework. This decision however was not made easily. The capability approach does have a strong potential for conceptualizing a wide specter of topics under the framework of ‘what people have reason to value’. Thus, a combination of the two perspectives was considered. However, due to the study’s limited space, it was decided that this alternative would be unfavorable.

Despite the abandonment of the capability approach, the understanding of relevance as it is framed within this approach will be applied in this study, that is, ‘what people have reason to value’. The analysis and discussion of relevance will however not be performed in light of the capability approach, but rather in light of Fishman and Bourdieu’s theories.

The capability based notion of relevance is inevitably a question of for *whom* and for *what*. In this context, where the subject of interest is to elucidate the relevance of MTI, the for *whom* aspect will be covered through the perceptions of the study’s participants, that is, K.r.p. currently residing in Oslo and Gothenburg. The for *what* aspect will be understood as what these participants find to be potential and valuable learning outcomes of MTI. Thus, the understanding of relevance that is applied in this study can be summarized as follows: *for what learning outcomes do K.r.p find MTI to be relevant?* The following section will provide an account of the concepts and theories that will be employed for the analysis and discussion of this overarching research question.

3.2 Approaching MTI in light of Joshua Fishman’s theories

Joshua Fishman’s theories of language shift, language maintenance and reversing language shift have been major contributors to the way sociolinguists have come to understand and analyze bilingualism in society. The concepts he has employed in his theories have become pertinent within the field as they provide tools for understanding the social and political dynamics in what we now call linguistically diverse settings. Particularly his theories on language shift and reversing language shift (1972; 1991; 2000) have contributed to the now well-established approach in critical studies; which have been increasingly interested in providing understandings of how and why language shift takes place in diaspora and diglossia contexts and how these instances can be reversed (cf. Fishman, 2000; Barkhuizen &

Kamwangamalu, 2013). Ofelia García (2009) argues that within the field, “the study of language shift has received more attention than that of *language maintenance*” (p. 80) as the phenomenon of language shift has been more common due to minority language groups in these contexts having been faced with pressure to assimilate from dominant groups. However, García (op.cit.) states that a change of focus has taken place in the field as scholars have become more interested in trying to solve or hinder the issues related to language shift rather than just describing it. As a result, Fishman’s theories have been employed to investigate ways in which language minority groups can maintain or revitalize the use of their first languages in their diaspora contexts (cf. Fishman, 2000; Barkhuizen & Kamwangamalu, 2013).

Fishman conceptualizes individual bilingualism, which he defines as individual linguistic versatility (1972, p. 102), within the larger contexts of societal bilingualism, i.e. ‘diglossia’⁵. Fishman’s understanding of diglossia (1967) is an extension of Charles A. Ferguson’s (1959) notion that was concerned with varieties of individual languages. According to Ferguson’s notion, a single language could have a so-called H(igh) variety that was believed to be congruent with prestigious functions in official domains, and a L(ow) variety that was associated with ordinary functions in the informal domains of family life. Fishman’s extended understanding of this notion encompassed not only varieties of individual languages, but also separate individual languages. As a result, he argues that it is possible to talk about diglossia in terms of H(igh) languages that are perceived as to be congruent with the domains of education, government etc., and L(ow) languages that are perceived to be congruent with the family, community, etc. domains. In order for there to be diglossia in a society, it is important that each language serves certain specified functions that cannot be considered appropriate for another language. As a result, each language will maintain its functions in a diglossia society “that recognized two (or more) languages or varieties for intra-social communication” (Fishman, 1972, p. 92) and considers these as “fully accepted as culturally legitimate and complementary (i.e., non-conflictual)” (ibid).

In light of this understanding, Fishman accounts for two categories of languages that fulfill different societal functions: the threatened Xish-languages of Xmen with which Xish has been

⁵ Recent literature has been sceptic of the overall notion of diglossia (cf. Romaine, 2006; Williams 1992) and some have proposed to replace its use with multilingualism as no one language is longer believed to be congruent with separate functions or spaces in the complex multilevel realities of linguistically diverse societies.

historically associated, and the un-threatened or less threatened Yish-languages of Ymen. Fishman's understanding of what constitutes a Xish language is

“languages that are not replacing themselves demographically, i.e. they have fewer and fewer users generation after generation and the uses to which these languages are commonly put are not only few, but, additionally, they are typically unrelated to higher social status (prestige, power) even within their own ethnocultural community” (1991, p. 81).

Thus, Yish can be taken as that language of the dominant population. Fishman advocates a protection and maintenance of the individual functions that Xish languages serve in the face of the functions that a Yish language serves in diglossic societies (op.cit. p. 85). He argues that this can take place through a social situation of 'bilingualism with diglossia', that is, when (a) Xmen become bilingual, and (b) there are non-conflictual relations between majority and minority languages, and societal recognition and arrangement for different languages to serve well-defined and protected functions in society. Fishman explains that it is only through these situations that threatened languages can be maintained and protected.

The societal situation that hinders this form of Xish maintenance is that where bilingualism exists without diglossia. That is, societies where there are individuals who use more than one language in their daily lives, but there exists no system-wide recognition, acceptance or arrangement for the maintenance of the functions of both/all of these languages as culturally legitimate and complementary. Fishman argues that in these situations there will be a conflictual relationship between Xish and Yish languages as the un-threatened language of the government domain will replace and displace the functions of the Xish languages. This will ultimately lead to language shift. In the sociolinguistic field, the general understanding of this phenomena relates to those instances when minority language groups; such as immigrants, indigenous populations etc., cease to use their first language in favor of using a new and more predominant majority language.

In order to determine whether or not a shift has indeed taken place; Fishman proposes an assessment of three language dimensions, that is, the *media* by which a language is used, its *overtness* and its *domains* of use (1991, p. 42-43). The final dimension, domain, which is particularly relevant in this study, allows one to assess the socio-cultural contexts with which a particular language is perceived to be congruent, realized and implemented. Fishman defines the notion of domains as “all of the interactions that are rather unambiguously related to one another of the major institutions of society” (1991, p. 44). Thus, domains can be

understood as the major societal institutions with which certain forms of related interactions are associated, i.e. the family, the work sphere, education, government, community etc. The interactions that take place within these domains are so-called role-relations that are connected by a common set of behavior rules, for example, within the family domain, the parent-child-relationship is characterized by a particular form of acting and speaking. Fishman explains that bilingual individuals living in diglossic societies can perceive certain languages as to be congruent with certain domains on the basis of their experiences from their role-relationships within these domains. Ultimately, a Xish language might be perceived to be congruent with the social interactions that take place within one particular domain, such as the family, while a Yish language might be perceived to be congruent with another cluster of interactions in another domain, like the government.

Maintaining a Xish language can thus be understood as a continued use and protection of the language's functions across these three dimensions despite it being faced with competition from a majority language. Fishman argues that this maintenance depends on intergenerational continuity, which involves the language being used for well-defined functions and domains over three generations. An essential aspect of this maintenance is for Xmen to sustain the link between the language and the ethnocultural community with which the language has been historically and traditionally associated. Thus, by maintaining a language, Fishman states that one can ensure individual and collective ethnocultural identity; that is, Xmen-via-Xish, so as to ensure intergenerational language continuity.

In those instances when a shift has taken place, Fishman proposes instigation of efforts to revitalize the threatened language's functions in society whereby he presents the so-called *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (GIDS, see Figure 2) (1991, p. 87-111, 395). This plan has come to be one of the models by which scholars have assessed minority languages' degree of risk or vitality in the face of dominant majority languages⁶. The GIDS is an eight-step model that is intended as a guide for the priorities and targets of efforts to 'do something' about "the societal functions [...] of a particular language" (op.cit., p. 81).

⁶ Studies of *language revitalization* (Hinton & Hale, 2001; Gorter & Cenoz, 2012) have similar traits to Fishman's reversing language shift plan. These writings have however pointed to some weaknesses about Fishman's theory as it is regarded to be too focused on European issues. Fishman's theories have thus been argued to be inapplicable for Indigenous language communities (Hinton 2003).

<p style="text-align: center;">Stages for Reversing Language Shift: Severity of Intergenerational Disruption (read from the bottom up)</p> <p>1: Education, work sphere, mass media and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels 2: Local/regional mass media and governmental services 3: The local/regional work sphere, both among minority and among majority speakers 4b: Public schools for Xish children, offering some instruction via Xish, but substantially under Yish curricula and staff control 4a: Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under Xish curricular and staffing control</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>II RLS to transcend diglossia, subsequent to its attainment</i></p> <p>5: Schools for literacy acquisition, for the old and for the young, and not in lieu of compulsory education 6: The intergenerational and demographically concentrated family-home-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother tongue transmission 7: Cultural interaction in X primarily involves the older generation of the community 8: Reconstructing Xish and adult acquisition of the language</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I RLS to attain diglossia</i></p>
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Figure 1 Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (1991, p. 395).

Securing these bottom four stages of the plan does not depend on support or recognition from those in power as it can be facilitated within the private domains of the family and community. Fishman states that covering these stages can secure bilingualism with diglossia whereby the Xish language is maintained within and for the private domain and the Yish language controls the official domains. Fishman argues that if one seeks to gain increased cultural autonomy and power-sharing in the official domains, the upper stages of the plan must be undertaken. At these stages, one becomes more dependent on governmental support and recognition; as in stages three to one for example, one aims to create independent and well-defined contexts for functions of Xish within the higher governmental and occupational domains. However, all of these later stages presume a well-secured stage 6, which Fishman regards as the crucial stage for intergenerational language continuity. Here, the Xish language is facilitated and fostered in all informal interactions inside the immediate family and community domain. Also, it is at this stage that Xmen-via-Xish can be achieved.

As is evident from step 5, 4a and 4b in the plan, Fishman believes that education, being contributory rather than unique, plays an important part in the process of reversing language shift and maintaining the functions of Xish languages. In the initial stage of education for threatened language (stage 5) Fishman argues that the aim must be to broaden the functional periphery of Xish to include Xish literacy through unofficial, community-based instruction under Xish control. If this stage in Xish language maintenance is secured, intergenerational

continuity will be secured. At this point, no government support or approval is needed for the maintenance of the language. However, at stage 4a and 4b, the Xish communities become more reliant on governmental support as they in stage 4a must fulfill official requirements of what is considered “minimally adequate and desirable in education” (1991, p. 99), and in stage 4b, must accept a centrally controlled curriculum.

Fishman explains that within populations that utilize more than one speech variety, the study of language shift and language maintenance is the study of “the relationship between degree of change (or stability) in language usage patterns, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, cultural, or social processes, on the other hand” (1972, p. 109). It is in light of this definition that Fishman’s theories are applicable for this study. By investigating perceptions regarding Kurdish language use and functions and the factors that influence these perceptions; it is possible to provide an understanding of what constituted the relevance of maintaining the Kurdish language within a larger Swedish and Norwegian language contexts through MTI in public schools. Thus, viewing the findings in light of Fishman’s theories will help to provide an understanding of how the perceived relevance of MTI can be understood as perceptions of an opportunity for maintaining the Kurdish language’s functions and domains within the larger competing Swedish and Norwegian language contexts. The analysis of the findings will thus be guided by some central concepts from Fishman’s writings, that is, *language functions and domains*.

Further addressing the essential notion of the study, i.e. relevance, reminds us that it is the ‘valued learning outcomes’ that the participants account for that constitutes the central interest of the data analysis. Thus, language functions and domains are the two theoretical categories by which the for *what* and for *where* aspects of ‘valued learning outcomes’ will be determined. The former category is understood as the valued *uses* with which the participants generally associate the Kurdish language. In light of this understanding, the following restatement of research question 1a, which addresses the for *what* aspects of valued learning outcomes of MTI, can be made for the purpose of the data analysis:

What valued functions of Kurdish do the parents believe that MTI can help to facilitate?

The domain category will be understood as the societal institutions with which the participants commonly associate and value the Kurdish language. As a result, the data

analysis of the findings that relate to research question 1b, the for *where* aspect of valued learning outcomes of MTI, will be guided by the following question:

For which domains do the parents believe that the Kurdish language is valuable?

As Fishman's definition of what constitutes the study of language maintenance and language shift indicated, one of the major topics of investigation in this field is the influences of possible ongoing psychological, cultural, or social processes. In this case, they relate to the perceptions of what constitutes valued language functions and language domains. Fishman explains that "the determination of the circumstances under which language and nonlanguage behaviours change [...] constitutes one of the major intellectual challenges currently facing this field of inquiry" (1972, p. 122). This means that determining *why* the parents perceive the relevance of MTI the way they do, that is, the factors that influence their perceptions, can be a challenging task if one is to preset possible influential factors. Thus, these factors will be determined inductively through the participants' viewpoints. Hence, those influencing factors that are traceable in the way the parents perceive the relevance of MTI will be extrapolated and analyzed for the elucidation of research question 2.

3.3 A critical approach to MTI

García (2009) argues that language shift or language maintenance occurs when certain societal conditions are present, such as "difference in power" (p.90) and "pressure in political, economic or social forms from one or two language groups" (ibid). In light of this understanding, one can argue that the question of language maintenance through education, and bilingual education in general, is inevitably a question of societal power relations.

The group of educational researchers⁷ who have focused on these issues, have contributed massively to the development of what has now become a well-established critical approach to bilingual education. This approach focuses on "the ways in which educational policies *and* classroom practices contribute to the reproduction of asymmetries of power between groups of different social and linguistic resources" (Martin-Jones, 2007, p. 171). Through ethnographic interaction investigations of communicative practices and classroom relations between children from linguistic minority groups and teachers; educational scholars have

⁷Cf. Heller, 1995; 1999; 2001; Blackledge, 1999; 2000; Hornberger, 1988; Hornberger & Ricento, 1996; Tollefson, 1991; Heller & Martin-Jones, 1996.

provided understandings of how education is linked to wider political language ideologies. They argue that it is within these contexts that social identities are constructed and unequal power relations are maintained. Ultimately, the institution of education has come to be understood as the domain in which nation-states implement their political interests related to linguistic authority and legitimacy. As previously mentioned, the writings of the sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1986; 1991; & Passeron, 1990) have provided an important foundation for this understanding of education⁸.

In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu and Passeron introduce the notions of ‘symbolic power’ and ‘symbolic violence’ (1990). According to the authors, the unified interests of the nation-state and the labor market govern public institutions, such as the educational system. This unification, which constitutes the social elite, has a ‘symbolic power’ to construct and generalize a standard and dominant language. The exercise of symbolic power takes place by the elite imposing and transmitting their culture and language as legitimate; in a way that conceals the actual power relations that allows for this to take place. In other words, they create an ideology of what constitutes legitimate languages and cultures through processes of hegemony, that is, “power is retained by elites not through force but by their ability to project their own way of seeing the world onto those whom they subordinate” (Cook & Simpson, 2012, p. 117). This exercise of symbolic power is inevitably connected to social recognition. That is, when the symbolic order and official language is recognized and adhered to by the dominated as the legitimate order (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 53). This phenomena is what Bourdieu and Passeron refer to as an act of symbolic violence, which is realized through the elite’s control over valued material and symbolic resources in society.

Bourdieu and Passeron argue that the dominant position of the elite and their definitions of what constitutes societal legitimacy is sustained and reproduced through society’s public institutions; whereby the educational system functions as the most essential mediator. They explain this as follows: “[a]ll pedagogical action [...], is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power” (op.cit., p. 5). The role of formal education in these processes is twofold: on the one hand, it controls individual

⁸ Despite its common acceptance and application to critical studies, Bourdieu’s theory has faced some critiques. Heller and Martin-Jones (2001) have argued that the theory does not take into account the interactional nature of class-room interaction in the definition of symbolic domination in education. Kathryn Woolard (1985) has showed that there is a weakness in Bourdieu’s understandings of the educational system being unified with the labour market in her studies of the position of Catalan in Spain.

students' access to valued material and symbolic resources, while on the other hand, it sustains and reproduces the hegemonic power by imposing recognition and adherence to what is defined as cultural and linguistic legitimacy. These two instances are inevitable interrelated as the former feeds the latter and vice versa. Consequently, educational institutions function as facilitators and mediators of the elite's definition of valuable and legitimate culture and language. At the same time, it concordantly devalues and excludes other forms.

In terms of language specifically, Bourdieu and Passeron explain that “[i]n the process which leads to the construction, legitimation and imposition of an official language, the educational system plays a decisive role” (op.cit., p. 48). By teaching the standard language, and by assessing student performance on the basis of adherence to this standard; the educational system devalues the every-day languages of students, while at the same time imposing a recognition for the official standardized language. Students and the parents regard education as a key facilitator for social and occupational mobility, and ultimately comply with, submit to and recognize the dominant power and their definitions of what constitutes legitimate culture and language. Bourdieu and Passeron argue that this ultimately leads to identity formations that are framed by the elite. In this way, the social order and the hegemonic power is reproduced.

In this study, Bourdieu's theory will be employed for a discussion of how the notions of symbolic power and symbolic violence are relevant in the way Kurdish language functions and domains within the larger Swedish and Norwegian language contexts are perceived by the participants. In other words, Bourdieu's theories will be used in the discussions of how symbolic power influences the way the relevance of MTI is perceived.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the study's analytical and theoretical frameworks. The understanding of relevance that has been adopted is inspired by the capability based approach to the phenomenon, that is, relevance of education understood as 'valued learning outcomes'. The study's theoretical frameworks are based on Joshua Fishman and Pierre Bourdieu's theories. Fishman's theory will be employed for the discussion of the degree to which, and how the relevance of MTI may be understood as a perceived opportunity for maintaining Kurdish language functions and domains within larger Swedish and Norwegian language

contexts. Bourdieu's theories will be used for the discussion of how relevant the notion of symbolic power is for the way the relevance of MTI is perceived.

The analytical framework adopted for the analysis of the data is based on Fishman's theories. That is, the notions of language functions and domains are set as two theoretical categories by which the for what and for where aspects of 'valued learning outcomes' of MTI will be determined. In light of these frameworks, the analysis of the data for research question 1a and 1b will be guided by the following conceptual questions: (1a) what valued functions of the Kurdish language do the parents believe MTI can help to facilitate?; (1b) for which domains in their children's lives do the parents believe that Kurdish language functions are valuable? The study's second research question was decided to be elucidated inductively, that is, no theoretical or conceptual frameworks were adopted for the analysis of the data that relates to this research question.

4 Contextual background

«We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant» (Sadler, 1979, p. 49)

These famous words of one of the founders of the field of comparative and international education, Sir Michael Sadler, remind us about the importance of respect for contextual realities. A respect which involves acknowledging each educational system's deep roots within its respective country's social, political, and economical contexts; and an understanding of the *dialectical* processes which form educational systems and their respective societies (Fägerlind & Saha, 1998, p. 226). Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to account for the political contexts that provide the framework within which the participants of the study conceptualize the relevance of MTI (section 4.1). Furthermore, the chapter provides a brief and general account of the historical, linguistic and political background of the Kurdish people (section 4.2).

4.1 MTI – a matter of ideology and power

In order to develop a holistic understanding of a country's formal educational endeavor, one can trace the history of a country's political processes and interests that have effected its educational system. Thus, the purpose of this subchapter is to briefly contextualize Norwegian (section 4.1.1) and Swedish (4.1.2) educational policy on MTI within a political history perspective of the past three decades in order to understand the current educational system in both countries.

4.1.1 The political context in Norway – a discourse of monolingualism

The linguistic rights to MTI for language minorities in Norway were legally established in 1998 in section 2-8 of the national Educational Act for primary and secondary education (The Department of Education 1998):

“Pupils attending the primary and lower secondary school who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami shall be entitled to special Norwegian instruction until they have sufficient proficiency in Norwegian to follow the normal instruction of the school. If necessary, such pupils shall also be entitled to mother tongue instruction, subject teaching in both the mother tongue and Norwegian, or both.

[...]When mother tongue instruction and subject teaching in both the mother tongue and Norwegian cannot be provided by its own teaching personnel, the municipality shall as far as possible provide for other instruction adapted to the pupils’ requirements” (Chapter 2, Section 2-8).

In accordance with this statement, the Norwegian educational system is only to provide MTI, or other forms of bilingual instruction, for linguistic minorities who are not sufficiently proficient in the Norwegian language. This means that, children who are proficient in Norwegian are not eligible for MTI in Norway. It follows that, linguistic minorities who do not comprehend the language of instruction in regular class-room teaching, are entitled to MTI in the form of transitional language programs that make use of their mother tongues for the purpose of improving the students’ linguistic knowledge of the Norwegian language. When the students are perceived to be proficient in Norwegian, they lose their right to receive MTI. The ultimate purpose of providing MTI in primary schools in Norway is thus to promote and foster efficiency in the dominant medium of instruction, i.e. Norwegian. In regards to the practical implementations of this right, the administrative responsibility is issued to the individual municipalities, such as Oslo; which are legally accountable for the provision of MTI as long as it is financially and administratively feasible.

The nature of this right, its historical contexts and its implications on educational policies and practice, have been criticized by acknowledged sociolinguists and educational researchers in Norway (Wold, 1992; Hvenekilde, 1994; Engen & Kulbrandstad, 2004; Pihl, 2001; 2009; 2010; Øzerk, 2008). The most central discussions have been related to the transitional language programs that this law promotes. Thor Ola Engen (1994; & Kulbrandstad, 2004) and Joron Pihl (op.cit.) criticize this practice and argue that these educational policies reflect the government’s nationalistic ideology that is embedded in political discourses with hegemonic and monolingual underpinnings. Their arguments are based on a retrospect of the shift in ideology that took place in the country with the transition between two significant educational reforms, i.e. *Mønsterplan av 1987* from 1987 (a national curriculum for primary and secondary school), and the national curriculum of 1997 (for the same levels).

During the years leading up to the implementation of the 1987 reform, up until the time when work on the 1997 reform commenced, Norwegian education was governed by a strong pluralistic and anti-homogenizing ideology that aimed at facilitating multilingualism. This ideology recognized linguistic and cultural diversity in the educational system as a resource, especially for the individual linguistic minority learner. The political rhetoric indicated that this diversity should be preserved and cultivated within the framework of public education. Hence, it was legislated in the 1987 reform that MTI would be provided as a maintenance based model. However, the political rhetoric remained at a rhetorical level as the conditions for a substantive implementation of MTI were never provided at the political levels. Instead, nationalistic discourses were enforced.

In the early 1990s, when work on the new educational reform commenced, the educational system underwent a shift in ideology, particularly in regards to the views on the provision of MTI for immigrant minorities. This change reflects in many ways the large scale changes that took place in the Western world where right-wing political forces flourished, and the economic and cultural optimism from the 70's and 80's' relapsed. Like elsewhere in Western countries, educational policy-makers in Norway, as well as Sweden, were unwilling to continue investments in socio-democratic educational models driven by an anti-homogenizing ideology. Instead, the *neoconservative ideology* (Apple, cited in Aasen, 2003) arose; and along with it discourses that viewed education as the transforming agent "for real knowledge, basic skills, morality, Western traditions, high culture and national identity" (Aasen, 2003, p. 123). Aasen argues that increased immigration and "the growing diversity in the Scandinavian countries challenged the previous simplistic conception of a common culture" (Aasen, 2003, p. 129). Pihl (2001; 2009; 2010) and Engen (1994; & Kulbrandstad, 2004) explain that for these reasons, various stakeholders advocated that the educational institution should be the culturally unifying macro-level body that preserves national identity through the provision of standard educational content for all. Thus, by the end of the 1990s, with the implementation of the new curriculum, Norway had forsaken the aims of facilitating immigrant minority pupils' functional bilingualism through MTI; and adopted the transitional bilingual language model that promotes Norwegian as the standard official language.

Pihl (2010, p. 51-59) asserts that the nationalistic, ethnocentric discourses are still prevalent in the current curriculum *Kunnskapsløftet*, which was implemented in 2006. This is primarily due to the transitional bilingual model that is unavoidable due to paragraph 2.8 in the

Educational Act that promotes immigrant minority pupils' knowledge in the Norwegian language at the expense of their first language. Pihl argues that this model is undergirded by nation-building strategies that aim to unify the population through the promotion of monoculturalism and monolingualism. The latter notion can be understood as "the idea that the ideal society should be as uniform or homogeneous as possible" (Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998, p. 117). Pihl argues that on the basis of such discourses, in the name of national unity, educational policy makers have not only failed to recognize immigrant minority students' linguistic dispositions in the realm of the public educational system, they have also strategically aimed to assimilate this population by providing transitional MTI programs that promote language shift.

While these historical trends and political ideologies from Norway can be traced in the Swedish educational political context, there is one significant difference between the two countries in regards to the public provision of MTI: unlike Norway, Swedish educational policies have legislated immigrant minority pupils' right to learn their so-called 'home' languages at public schools.

4.1.2 The political context in Sweden – an underlying monolingual bias

Sweden implemented their current Educational Act in June 2010. The regulations regarding the provision of MTI in primary school are stated as follows:

«A student who has a caretaker with a mother tongue other than Swedish will be offered mother tongue instruction in this language if

- 1. the language is the student's everyday language of interaction in the home, and*
- 2. the student has basic knowledge in the language.*

[...] The Government or the authority appointed by the Government will announce the administrative regulations of mother tongue instruction. Such administrative regulations involve mother tongue instruction in a language to be offered only if a specific amount of pupils request such instruction in that language⁹. (Translation from the official document Ministry of Education, 2010, chapter 10, 7 §)

⁹ Original Swedish text: «En elev som har en vårdnadshavare med ett annat modersmål än svenska ska erbjudas modersmålsundervisning i detta språk om

- 1. språket är elevens dagliga umgängesspråk i hemmet, och*
- 2. eleven har grundläggande kunskaper i språket.*

In accordance with this legislation, all immigrant minority pupils in primary schools in Sweden have the right to receive voluntary mother-tongue instruction on certain conditions. Which are, firstly, that the pupil must have at least one caretaker that has a mother tongue other than Swedish, and secondly, that there is a minimum amount of pupils (currently 5) within a municipality who request instruction in one particular language. If these criteria are met, like in Norway, each municipality is accountable for providing MTI as long as it is financially and practically feasible. Regulations on how MTI can be organized are provided in the official School Regulation document of 2011 (Skolförordning 2011:185). Four options are stated: (1) MTI can be provided *as a subject of choice* where the pupil chooses to learn his/her mother tongue instead of a foreign language; (2) as *the language choice of the pupil* where he/she can choose his/her mother tongue as the medium of instruction for a particular subject; (3) as *the language choice of the school* where the schools freely single out a subject to be taught; and finally (4) as *lessons provided outside the regular school timetable* for a duration of a maximum of seven years. The organizational option that most municipalities had opted for by 2012 (Vetenskapsrådet, 2012, p. 56) was in the latter form, that is, MTI has generally been provided as sixty minute lessons outside of regular school schedule in small groups.

The current policies on MTI in Sweden can be viewed in light of the political discourses on two central policy documents: the *Immigrant Report: Immigrants and minorities* (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 1974) from 1974, with which all official policies on immigration commenced; and the *Home Language Reform* (Riksdagen, 1975/1976) from 1977, which is, despite having been altered over the years, the current basis for minority language instruction.

In 1974, the very first Swedish policy to be directed towards the education of immigrant minorities commenced. It was a response to the growing migrant population that settled in the country. Sally Boyd (2007), states that the discourse in this report was of a multicultural and pluralistic nature. At the time, it was quite unusual in the Western world as one aimed at integration rather than the assimilation of immigrants; and thus moved away from the general nationalist ideology trends where nation-building discourses dominated. In Sweden, the educational policy discourses had individualist orientations and a view on schooling as the primary actor for the development of a pluralistic democracy where individual self realization and education for the private good was in focus (Aasen, 2003). These discourses were

[...] Regeringen eller den myndighet som regeringen bestämmer får meddela föreskrifter om modersmålsundervisning. Sådana föreskrifter får innebära att modersmålsundervisning ska erbjudas i ett språk bara om ett visst antal elever önskar sådan undervisning i det språket."

reflected in the 1974 report where the guiding principles were *equality, freedom of choice* and *co-operation* for the country's new migrated residents. The second concept came to be the basis on which the 1977 *Home Language Reform* would be developed, as the formulations suggested that all immigrants be given "the right to decide to what extent they wished to retain the culture and language of their country of origin" (Boyd, 2007, p. 146).

As an extension of this principle, in 1977, Sweden legislated the *Home Language Reform* that explicitly stated that MTI was to be provided for all immigrant minority pupils with the purpose of facilitating bilingualism. This reform thus promoted maintenance-based bilingual models. Evidently, the educational policy-makers stressed the importance of preserving the country's linguistic diversity and thus undergirded a pluralist ideology related to the provision of MTI. This was ten years before any discourses of this sort were to be traced in Norwegian educational policies. However, towards the end of the 1970s, Sweden faced economic recession which resulted in restrictions in eligibility requirements for MTI. By 1987, it became a fact that the expressed intentions and guidelines in the reform were not realized in practice (Ingigerd Municio 1987). This was the result of an alteration in the reform in 1985 that led to stricter eligibility requirements¹⁰ that were reinforced in 1997 when the name 'home language' was changed to 'mother tongue'¹¹.

In the mid 1990s, as a response to Sweden's entry into the European Union, new discourses on MTI arose. Like elsewhere in Europe, the English language started becoming more central in public life in Sweden. Hence, policy makers saw the need for strengthening the status of the Swedish language. In 2009 *The Language Act* (Ministry of Education, 2009) was legislated and the nationalist ideology supported by monolingual discourses was a fact in all aspects of language policy, including those related to MTI. The dual purpose of the policy was to regulate and safeguard the position of the Swedish language as the country's official *lingua franca*, and the country's language diversity (Boyd, 2011). However, Boyd argues that, in reality, the policy counteracted the latter on the basis of what Boyd refers to as the policy's monolingual bias which confers that "Swedish is and should be the obvious language of choice in public interaction" (ibid, p.34). The type of diversity that the policy refers to is "with regards to high-status languages rather than [the] language diversity represented by

¹⁰ The minimum number of students who requested MTI in a particular language was set at five.

¹¹ The reform required that the parents declare a mother tongue for their child with which they communicated in the home.

most of the other languages spoken in the country” (ibid). In regards to the current political discourses related to the provision of MTI in Sweden, Boyd states the following:

”The policies aimed at managing Sweden’s multilingualism seem to have as their strategy to maintain a basically monolingual Swedish discourse in the public sector [...], while multilingualism is related to the private sector (the concept of ‘home language’) and limited, marginalized parts of the public and independent school offerings. The community thus envisaged is monolingual in the public sphere and multilingual in the private sphere” (p. 151).

In light of the preceding discussion, it is safe to say that the current educational policy contexts in Norway and Sweden are dissimilar in certain respects and similar in others. The fundamental and most explicit difference can be found in the formulations on the right to MTI in the two countries’ Educational Acts which consequently facilitate differing bilingual educational models; the Norwegian system provides transitional language programs, while the Swedish system’s model is more in line with a maintenance based model. The similarities between the two countries are manifested in their language ideologies and political discourses whereby both countries have monolingually oriented language policies. While the political contexts and language ideologies in the two countries have changed over the past four decades, so has their demographic composition, whereby Kurdish refugee immigrants have added to the countries’ linguistic and cultural diversity.

4.2 Kurdish language and Kurdish refugees

When exploring the relevance of an educational phenomenon, one has to ask the question *relevance for whom*. This study approaches this phenomenon through the viewpoints of Kurds. Thus, a brief account of the Kurdish peoples’ linguistic and historical characteristics is necessary as this will provide a basis for understanding their viewpoints.

4.2.1 The Kurdish people and Kurdish language

The Kurdish people constitute one of the largest minority groups in the middle-east with a population of around 24-27 million people (Yildiz & Fryer, 2004). The history of the Kurds goes back to the old Indo-European people who settled in the Zagros Mountains in what is today Iraq and Iran (Yildiz & Fryer, 2004; Bulloch & Morris, 1992). The Kurdish people have since then always been closely connected, symbolically and geographically, to these

mountainous regions that to this day constitute the heartland of Kurdish territory (see map). As the map indicates, the Kurdish region covers a quite large area of northern Iraq, western Iran, eastern Turkey and northeastern Syria. This geographical division of the Kurdish people was the result of the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, and the British and French's establishment of nation states in their occupied regions.



Figure 2 Map of the Kurdish territories (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1992).

The Kurdish language belongs to the Persian branch of the Indo-European language family. It is a composition of various dialects that are not mutually comprehensible by all Kurdish people. The most employed is *Kurmanji*, which is the largest and spoken in the northern Turkish areas; *Soraní*, which is spoken most in Iran and north-western Iraq; and *Hawrami* (in European philology it is classified as a dialect of *Gorani*, *Zaza* and *Dimilki*), which is mainly spoken in Iran. These three dialects make up the literary Kurdish tradition; with texts in Kurmanji and Hawrami beginning to appear in the 16th century, and Soraní texts appearing in the 19th century. It is difficult to provide a figure as to how many Kurdish speakers there are in the world. Amir Hassanpour, et.al. (2012) explain that one of the reasons for this lies in the linguistic oppression and suppression of the Kurdish people in their countries of residence which have made it “virtually impossible to access census data on the number of Kurdish speakers” (p.15). Still, they estimate that “Kurdish ranks fortieth among the world’s 6,600 to 7,000 languages (op.cit., p. 2)

Besides the geographical diaspora of the Kurdish people and the differences in dialects, throughout history they have been a divided people due to differences in costumes, tribal rivalries, territorial divisions and attempts of cultural and linguistic annihilation by their host countries. This latter factor has resulted in the history of the Kurdish people often being described as “tragic” (Bullock & Morris, 1992), due to the severe cultural and linguistic suppression that the population has faced. One of the most explicit and indeed tragic evidences of this suppression is the Halabja massacre of March 1988 in Iraq, where 5000 were brutally killed at the hands of Saddam Hussein’s chemical weapons. This incidence was part of Saddam Hussein’s *Anfal* campaign (Human Rights Watch 1993a; 1993b) which has been described as an “extensive program of “Arabization” and genocide of the Kurdish population” in Iraq (Wahlbeck, 1999, p. 52). An estimated 100 000 Kurdish people were killed by the central government in this tragic event (Human Rights Watch 1993b).

In later years, the Kurdish population have continuously experienced conflicts with the governments in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, due to various forms of cultural and linguistic oppression of the Kurdish peoples’ rights. Generally, this has been due to the governments’ nationalistic strategies of assimilation. They have been the subjects of “Turkification” in Turkey (Üngör, 2012, Zeydanlioglu, 2012) and the already mentioned “Arabization” in Iraq (Yildiz & Fryer, 2004). As a response to these conditions, Kurdish people from various fields across these countries have fought back and advocated their political independence and their rights to maintain the use of their Kurdish language in schools, in the press and in media. The oppression has nevertheless resulted in many fleeing the four countries, making oppression the “major reason for the [Kurds’] flight” (Wahlbeck, 1999, p. 61). While most of the Kurdish refugees have fled to the Middle East, the majority of Kurdish refugees outside of this area are to be found in Europe where “new diasporic communities [...] have turned Kurdish into a transnational language” (Hassanpour et.al. 2012, p. 14).

It is difficult to estimate exactly how many Kurdish refugees reside in Norway and Sweden as population statistics in these countries often show the demographics of the immigrant population by *country* of origin. As Kurdistan does not have an official status as a country, it is assumed that Kurdish immigrants are categorized as to be from either Iran, Iraq, Turkey or Syria. However, in Sweden, the latest figures from 2010 (Vetenskapsrådet, 2012) show that Kurdish was one of the top 10 languages that was defined as to be the mother tongue of pupils

in primary school. Approximately 6000¹² primary students were eligible to receive MTI in Kurdish in 2010. In parallel, official figures from Norway indicate that there were approximately 1086 students in primary school who received MTI and/or some other form of bilingual education in the Kurdish language in 2012 (Statistics Norway, 2013b).

The following sections provide a brief account of the Kurdish people's (lack of) linguistic rights in their host countries. The sections have a focus limited to Iran and Iraq, as these states are the countries from which the participants in the study originate. However, it is worth noticing that an acknowledgement of the Turkish and Syrian contexts is important for an extensive understanding of the suffering that the Kurdish people have endured and struggled against over the past century.

4.2.2 The Kurdish peoples' (lack of) linguistic rights in Iran and Iraq

"I recall them using pictures of lambs and ostriches and things like that. I think I received twenty rounds of beating from my uncle over this: there was a thing called 'shotormogh' [Farsi for ostrich] my uncle was trying to teach me. He used to say 'say 'shotormogh'. I kept saying 'wushtergh' [Kurdish for camel]. Even to this day, I have not learned the word 'shotormogh' despite all the beating I had to endure. Why? Because I was not taught the Kurdish word for it. 'Shotor' [Kurdish for camel] and 'mogh' [Farsi for chicken] I understood separately, but when they were put together like 'shotormogh', I could only think 'wushtergh' [camel]" (Farhad, Oslo).

In Iran, the situation of the Kurdish language has been described by Jaffer Sheyholislami (2012) as to have been an instance of "linguicide" (the term originally derives from the writings of Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Sheyholislami explains this by pointing to the fact that ever since the monarchical period, minority languages, such as Kurdish, have been granted restricted tolerance in language policies. Kurdish was considered a dialect of the Persian language and was thus not to be taught in public schools, not as a subject, nor as the medium of instruction. Sheyholislami asserts that these factors ultimately resulted in:

"[s]igns of language shift from Kurdish to Persian in major urban centres such as Ilam, Kermanshah and Sanandaj [...]. The vast majority of people spoke Kurdish in the privacy of their homes and on the streets but they could not read or write their language, and those who did mostly kept it to themselves; it was not a valued skill" (Sheyholislami, 2012, p. 29).

¹² The figures were based on reports provided by the municipalities which clarified that there might be some deviations in the numbers.

The personal story cited at the beginning of this section, told by one of the participants in this study, is an illustration of how these policies affected the expectations of Kurdish pupils and what challenges they met in the pure Farsi-medium schools, which did not cater for Kurdish children's linguistic needs.

After the revolution of 1979 when the theocratic regime gained power, some changes were indicated as the Kurds entered into negotiations with the central government. One of their demands was for education to be provided in the medium of the mother tongue in the Kurdish areas. As an extension of this positivism, the KDPI¹³ and Komalah¹⁴ parties initiated teaching Kurdish through the medium of Kurdish in cities with a predominant Kurdish population. However, the negotiations with the government were not agreed upon and by 1985, the Kurdish cities and villages were under Iranian control and Persian had become "the sole language of instruction throughout Iranian Kurdistan" (Sheyholislami, 2012, p. 30).

The constitution from 1979, which still applies, explicitly states the Persian language as the *lingua franca* of the Iranian people. However, it also shows some sign of tolerance towards the use of the so-called regional and tribal languages in the press and in schools. In practice, there is however, no evidence that this has been realized for the Kurdish language (Sheyholislami, 2012). On the contrary, private and ad hoc initiatives to teach Kurdish in Kurdish cities in Iran, like the *Cultural and Teaching Society of Soma: Kurdish Learning School*; have gone unsupported and unrecognized by the officials. As a result, the Iranian language policies are actively suppressing the non-Persian languages in the country, including Kurdish. The situation is not much different in Iraq.

The Kurdish population in Iraq have generally had greater cultural and linguistic rights than those residing in Iran (Wahlbeck, 1999). That is, if one disregards the period of the *Anfal* campaign. Since the end of World War I, the Kurdish people have had limited autonomy within the northern Kurdish regions. This has been mainly due first to a Kurdish opposition against a strong British control and later, the Iraqi government. At several events, the Kurdish population have negotiated and managed to have their linguistic and cultural rights fulfilled across various domains of society in the Kurdish regions; including education where Kurdish has been used as the medium of instruction. However, there have been many setbacks throughout the past half century, and armed conflicts have taken place between the

¹³ Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

¹⁴ A Kurdish branch of the Communist party of Iran.

government and armed Kurdish groups. Despite these many setbacks and conflicts, in 1991, the Kurdistan Regional Government was formed (Hassanpour, 2012b) as a local self-government which covered the Kurdish areas of Suleimaniya, Arbil, Dohuk and Kirkuk. As an extension of this, since 2005 “Kurdish has become one of the official languages of Iraq and it is the medium of education, economic activity, administration and public services in the Kurdistan Regional government” (Sheyholislami, 2012, p. 44). The dialect that constitutes this official language is Soraní.

In regards to the linguistic and geographical background of the participants in this study, all employed the Soraní dialect. The majority originate from the eastern Kurdish areas, that is, the Kurdish regions of Iran (seven out of the ten couples). The three families that originated from the northern Kurdish areas of the Iraqi, Kurdistan region informed that they had attended Kurdish medium schools all throughout the primary and secondary levels.

5 Methodology

Our social world can be approached and studied through several lenses. The way we approach social reality, determines how we perceive and make sense of various social phenomena. In this case, the phenomenon under study is the relevance of MTI as perceived by K.r.p, with the aim being to provide rich and detailed descriptions and explanations of this very phenomenon. The priority of the study was therefore not to provide measurable generalizations based on objective and quantifiable data. In light of the purpose of the study, the study was approached within the interpretive paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1992) and the ontological and epistemological positions that this paradigm represents. Accordingly, the study adopted a subjective research approach and employed a qualitative research strategy (Bryman, 2008). This chapter provides a discussion of the considerations for adopting this strategy and the research procedures that were applied.

5.1 Research strategy

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research is the quest for deeper understanding of social entities through the perspectives of people. Accordingly, qualitative researchers often hold a constructionist ontological position as they believe that reality exists as a product of individual consciousness; i.e. in the way people make meaning of social life based on their views, experiences, interactions and perceptions (Bryman, 2008, p.19). The key to understanding our mode of existence lies consequently in understanding how people construct this very reality. As a result, one can assert that the task of a qualitative researcher is to provide insight into the perceptions of individuals in order to describe social reality. This approach is adopted here as it is believed that it will serve the overarching purpose of the study, which is precisely to understand the phenomenon of relevance as it is constructed by individual perceptions.

Another characteristic of the qualitative approach is that it is embedded in an anti-positivistic position. In contrast to the positivists, anti-positivists believe that knowledge about social reality is relativistic and can therefore not be obtained through the laws and methods of the natural sciences. This belief is embedded in a conviction that there is a fundamental difference between the subject matters in the natural sciences and that of the social sciences. The anti-positivists take the position that it is not possible to acquire objective knowledge of an

external and constant social world that is independent of social construction as such a world does not exist. For this reason, they argue that the data collection methods applied by the natural scientists, i.e. quantitative methods that are preoccupied with measurement and the production of generalizations, laws and numerical data; are not appropriate for acquiring knowledge about social behavior. As these methods fall short in grasping the complexity of perceptions about social reality. Instead, anti-positivists advocate qualitative research methods that allow exploration of the ways people interpret their social lives. This position constituted the most appropriate position for this study as it allows for an exploration of individual and subjective knowledge of what constitutes the relevance of MTI.

5.2 Research design

The history of comparative and international education goes back to the 19th century, and has, over the years been defined and explained in many ways. Sadler (cited in Bray, Adamson and Mason 2007), who is considered to be one of the 20th century's most influential thinkers within this field, describes research in comparative education as follows; "the value of studying foreign systems of education [lies in that we] become better fitted to study and understand our own" (p. 377). With this phrasing, Sadler advocated what has come to be a well established field of study; where one aims to compare various educational environments for the purpose of gaining better understandings of educational realities.

Following this understanding, I have chosen to adopt a comparative case design as I believe that by comparing two educational systems, the study can develop a better understanding of the individual educational contexts of interest. This comparative approach also allows for an examination of each case as a single unit of analysis from which in-depth contextual description about the phenomenon under study could be obtained. The findings from these investigations could then be compared based on the contextual commonalities and differences between the two cases. It is believed that this comparison will finally help to provide a rich fundament on which discussions of the educational phenomenon of interest, i.e. the relevance of MTI, could be made and lastly result in a better understanding of the status of this issue in the two educational systems. Hence, it was decided that Norway and Sweden would be examined as two individual cases.

5.3 Data collection method

Given the interest of the study and its guiding research questions, it is believed that the employment of semi-structured interviews with the selected participants would be the most appropriate methods to employ for collecting the necessary data for this study. A discussion of the chosen method will be provided in this section.

The benefits of semi-structured interviews are many when one seeks to collect complex, inductive and in-depth information about a specific phenomenon from the perspectives of individual viewpoints. In the context of this study, it was believed that adopting this method would allow for the possibility to ask the subjects open questions that would invite them to share their viewpoint regarding the issue in focus. Also, it was believed that the flexible nature of such a method would allow the interviewees to express their opinions on matters important to them without having to be restricted by unbendable interview questions. In other words, this method would allow for the collection of complex and diverse viewpoints that could, in the end, amount to a thorough depiction of the study's central issue.

It follows that two interview-guides were created for each case (see Appendices A and B). The guides were sectioned into three major parts based on the following topics; a) language and mother tongue, b) schooling and mother tongue instruction, and finally c) participation in decision-making. Each of these parts consisted of interview questions that were designed to yield answers that could shed light on the overarching research questions. Regarding the phrasing of the questions, great consideration was given to the choice of language. As it was decided that the interview-settings should be determined by the needs and wishes of the participants, so as to create the most comfortable and welcoming environment for them. In order to accommodate for this view, it was decided that the participants should be provided with the opportunity to decide which language they preferred to use during the interviews. As a result, the interview-guides were phrased both in English as well as in Kurdish; the latter version of the guide was, notably, spelled with Latin letters as I, myself, have not mastered Kurdish literacy. With the exception of one case, in which the couple preferred to speak both Kurdish and Swedish, all of the interviewees chose to speak (and be spoken to) in Kurdish.

The interviews were carried out as planned within the time-frame of the field work period, i.e. in the months of September and October. In order to provide the most fruitful and comfortable settings for the participants, it was decided that the interviews would take place in the

participants' homes. This choice was based on the considerations of what was regarded as the alternative solution of conducting the interviews on school grounds; an alternative which deemed unfavorable as this would raise the possibility of the parents feeling hesitant or reluctant to speak freely and express possible opposing viewpoint on school policies. As a consequence, the time and place for the interviews were determined by the schedules and hospitality of the participants. Although these conditions posed a challenge in allocating the appropriate time and space for all parties, it turned out that the environment in which the interviews took place was greatly beneficial as the participants spoke very freely and provided an extensive range of viewpoints.

In regards to the analysis of the data, it was decided that an inductive approach would be adopted. That is, the analysis would not be guided by strict adherence to theoretical concepts. However, some frames were set. Firstly, the research questions provided the overarching analytical framework for the analysis of the data, that is, only the data which was perceived as to be relevant for the elucidation of the research questions were transcribed and analyzed. Within this overarching framework, some concepts which were derived from specific theories, were identified as the guiding concepts for the analysis. However, as has been elaborated in the preceding chapter, these concepts are considered to be rather open-ended. That is, they are considered as highly applicable for inductive interpretations of the findings.

5.4 Study-sites and sampling

The study-sites for this study were Gothenburg, Sweden, and Oslo, Norway. This choice was based on the historical and political communalities that these countries share. Aasen (2003) describes these similarities as follows:

“the similarities stem from political thinking and action, which in the latter part of the twentieth century were characterized as an attempt to create social democratic welfare societies. The commitment to welfare policy was clearly reflected in the education policies” (op.cit. p, 109).

Furthermore, over the past two decades, Norway has often looked to Sweden in its rethinking of educational policies related to MTI. The Norwegian website *Tema Morsmål* (topic mother tongue) (retrieved, 14.10.2013) is a great example, as this is a Norwegian version of the Swedish website *Tema Modersmål* (retrieved, 14.10.2013); which are digital centers for learning resources for MTI initiated by the educational departments in the respective

countries. Most recently, the Norwegian Directorate for Education published a direction document called *Children in Multilingual Families* (translation) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013) for parents with children in kindergartens and workers in public health centers. This text addresses some of the common concerns related to children's bilingual development and it has its starting point in a Swedish brochure called *Two Languages or More – advice to multilingual families* (referred to in Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 3).

In both Norway and Sweden it is the individual municipalities who are responsible for the practical implementations of the central educational policies related to MTI. Thus, it was decided that the participants for this study would be selected from two municipalities; i.e., Oslo and Gothenburg. This choice was primarily based on these cities being two of the largest urban areas in the respective countries. Furthermore, these cities represent two municipalities with largest immigrant populations¹⁵ (Statistics Norway, 2013a; Statistics Sweden, 2012; 2013). As was mentioned in section 3.2.2, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many Kurdish people reside in these cities as official population statistics show the demographics of the immigrant population by *country* or origin and not by ethnicity.

In qualitative studies such as this one, great considerations must be given to sampling of participants as the very essence of such studies is constructed by the viewpoints and perceptions of the individual participants. The overall aim of this study was to provide rich and detailed descriptions and explanations of the perceived relevance of MTI. In order to achieve this aim within the limits of this research project; it was believed that the accumulation of detailed and exhaustive data from a small number of cases would be more favorable than attempting to cover the topic by focusing on a larger number of cases. That could, time wise, increase the risk of ending up with slight and inadequate data. Thus, it was decided that ten couples, five in Oslo and five in Gothenburg, would be selected purposefully. The selection was based on the following specified criterions that would help to identify potentially relevant participants.

Besides one of the parents having to have a background as a political refugee, it was decided that only parents with permanent residencies in Norway/Sweden would be contacted in order to secure a more comparable sample. Also, it was decided that only Kurdish couples who had originated from the Soraní speaking region in Kurdistan would be included in the study, so as

¹⁵ Immigrant population defined in Norway as foreign-born individuals, and Norwegian-born individuals with foreign-born parents. Immigrant population definition in Sweden as individuals with foreign background.

to make the findings as comparable as possible. Furthermore, the selection would only include parents who had at least one child born and raised in Sweden/Norway so as to avoid issues related to introductory language programs for newly arrived immigrants; a topic that would reach beyond the scope of this project. Additionally, in order to position the study within the environment of present-day contexts, it was decided that the study would only include parents whose children currently attended primary school so as to be able to relate the findings to current educational policies on MTI. The final selection-criterion was set with regards to the respective countries' national educational policies on MTI that delegate the responsibility of the implementation and overall provision of MTI to the individual municipalities in each country (The Department of Educational, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2011). Considering these regulations, it was decided that the sample would be taken from the urban municipalities of Oslo and Gothenburg as these areas have the largest immigrant populations.

Being the daughter of two Kurdish refugees, I have over the years established strong familiar connections with members of the Kurdish community in both Oslo and Gothenburg (my role in the research procedures will be elaborated in section 5.5). As with my family, many of these individuals have been forced to flee their counties of origin due to the suffering of persecutions on account of their political opinions.

Initial contact, was made with two couples in each case, whom I considered, based on the specified criteria, to be relevant for the research topic. Thereafter, it was decided that contact with the remaining participants would be established through snowball sampling. In the case of Oslo, the planned approach was carried out successfully. However, in Gothenburg, this method fell short and I was forced to use other sources for establishing contact with participants. Two principals in Gothenburg municipality who were responsible for the provision of Kurdish (Sorani) and Persian language in primary school, were thus contacted; with the hope that they might be able to assist in the allocation of relevant participants through their teachers. Invitation letters for participation in the project were written in three languages (see appendices C, D and E) and sent to the principals. They then distributed these invitations through their teachers to the parents of pupils attending classes in Kurdish and Farsi. However, this initiative was unsuccessful as it did not result in the establishment of contact with any parents. Possible reasons for this might be that the teachers were unable to

convey the significance and the appeal of the projects to the parents as they themselves might not have had enough knowledge about the project.

Regardless, I was forced to seek the support of an acquaintance for establishing contact with the remaining couples. This acquaintance and her partner are well-known members of the Kurdish community in Gothenburg. They have both been active in various organizations, debates and publications, which has made them well-respected and highly central members also within the larger Kurdish community. With their support and social-network, contact was easily established with the remaining participants. If it had not been for my personal connections within the Kurdish community, I might not have been able to carry out the study in the same manner. It might have been possible to gain access through other approaches, like personal contact with teachers and parents at local schools upon arrival in Gothenburg, or contact with local Kurdish organizations or radio stations. However, these approaches would most likely have been more time consuming, and the level of trust and openness between the participants and I might have been changed due to the absence of a mutually familial mediator.

The sample-group in Oslo finally consisted of four couples, and one divorced couple. These families had all lived and migrated from Iran with the exception of one couple, who had lived in the Kurdish region of Iraq before migrating to Norway. The sample-group in Gothenburg was more diverse. Two of the families had migrated from Iran, one of which being a separated couple. The remaining couples had lived and migrated from Iraq. In two of these three were families, the husband was Kurdish and the wives were from Afghanistan and Lebanon. In the end, out of the ten couples, four had backgrounds as political refugees. Of the other six couples, the (former) husbands migrated as refugees whereas the (former) wives migrated to simply reunify with their partners.

5.5 Ethical considerations

As a qualitative researcher sets out to explore and reveal social realities through the viewpoints of individuals, he/she holds a significant responsibility for his/her participants in regards to possible effects of the research. Thus, throughout the various stages of a social study, great considerations have to be played to ethical principles so as to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and their informed consents.

The very first step to ensure adherence to ethical principles was to notify the *Norwegian Social Science Data Services* of the study, and be granted the permission to conduct research from the *Data Protection Official for Research* in Norway. In so doing, the study has complied with the national legal obligation related to data protection. Perhaps the most significant aspect of these obligations regards the protection of the anonymity of the participants in the study. In order to ensure this aspect, each participant was given pseudonyms and the printed, recorded and transcribed materials which stated information that could identify the participants, were securely stored.

Furthermore, prior to the field work period, an informed consent form was created (see appendices F and G). This form clearly stated the purpose of the study, its methods, its intended potential use and what participation in the study would entail. Also, it stated that participation was entirely voluntary and that the interviewees could withdraw from the interviews at anytime. Admittedly, the form can be subject to criticism as it was only written in Norwegian. Although the Norwegian participants had no issues with this language, in the case of Gothenburg, most of the participants did not understand all of the information. To address this issue, prior to each interview, I would read, translate and explain the form to the participant. This provided the participants with the opportunity to ask questions and I could make sure that the content of the form was understood and accepted.

In addition to the preceding considerations, I had to critically evaluate my personal role as a researcher so as to develop an awareness of how my personal background could affect the findings. This was mainly due to my closeness to the participants in terms of cultural, linguistic and social similarities. Both of my parents are Kurdish, and my first language is the Kurdish language. Here in Scandinavia, my family and I have strong connections to various Kurdish speech communities where the majority of the group members are political refugees. As with any other qualitative study, it is imperative to acknowledge that these factors that relate to personal cultural heritage, sex, age etc., have an inevitable effect on the various stages in the research process, both positively and negatively.

In terms of possible negative effects, there is reason to believe that the participants might have perceived me as an advocate for MTI due to my background as a member of a linguistic minority group living in Norway. In terms of positive effects, my membership in the Kurdish speaking communities in both Oslo and Gothenburg helped me to gain easy access to relevant participants. Thus, there was no need to contact for example external organizations for access,

something which might have led the participants to believe that the study reflected the intentions and positions of a possible organization. Also, my ability to communicate in the Kurdish language, which was the first language of the majority of the participants, was a great asset in the interview settings as this made it easier for the participants to communicate more easily and openly without the need for a translator. Moreover, it is believed that my knowledge of the cultural codes contributed to the establishment of a friendly and safe interview environment based on mutual trust for the participants. These factors, however, which I consider to be positive for the acquisition of necessary in-depth data, might present a challenge in terms of the study's replication.

5.6 Issues related to trustworthiness

One can evaluate and establish the quality of social research based on certain criteria. Although there have been many discussions as to how the quality of qualitative studies should be assessed and determined, central criteria have been repeatedly stressed despite being referred to in different wordings (Bryman, 2008; Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2010). This section discusses some of the relevant evaluation criterions for this study.

Replication in qualitative studies is related to “the degree to which a study can be replicated” (Bryman, 2008, p. 376). It is believed that this criterion is difficult to meet in qualitative research, as it is almost impossible to replicate a social setting. This study is no exception, as it may be a challenge for another researcher to adopt the same research-role that was adopted here. However, great attempts have been made to account for all the decisions that were made during the research process so as to address the replication criteria as well as possible.

Credibility in qualitative research, refers to the degree to which the researcher has managed to convey a trustworthy account of the findings (Bryman, 2008). In this case, credibility relates to how correct the interpretations and understandings of the information provided by my participants are. Credibility, in the current study, refers to whether or not a correct depiction of the participants' perceptions has been provided. One way of ensuring credibility in qualitative studies is to employ the *respondent validation* technique, where the researcher seeks to get a confirmation from the participants on his/her interpretations and impressions of their viewpoints. This technique was applied during the course of all the individual interviews.

6 Presentation of findings

This chapter presents the major tendencies in the collected data. The chapter consists of two sections: 6.1, *Perceived language functions*, and 6.2 *Perceived relevance of Kurdish language in domains*. These sections reflect the guiding conceptual questions that were developed for research question one's analytical framework, that is,

1a. *What valued functions of the Kurdish language do the parents believe MTI can help to facilitate?*

1b. *For which domains in their children's lives do the parents believe that Kurdish language functions are valuable?*

Consequently, section 6.1 addresses the findings that relate to 1a, and section 6.2 concentrates on the data that is relevant for 1b. Ultimately, these sections will present the findings that elucidate the for *what* and for *where* aspects of what the participants perceive as to be 'valued learning outcomes' of MTI. The findings that pertain to research question two, that is, *what factors that influence the parents' perceptions regarding the relevance of MTI*, will be accounted for continuously within the two sections. In regards to the comparative aspect of the data analysis the findings suggests that similarities prevailed as a general tendency. Thus, the findings from both sites will be presented in conjunction rather than in separate sections.

6.1 Perceptions on valued language functions

In regards to the for *what* aspect of valued learning outcomes that pertain to research question 1a, the theoretical category of *language functions* from Fishman's theories was set as a determinant. This was understood as *the valued uses with which the participants generally associate the Kurdish language*. This section presents the tendencies in the findings that relate to this notion and how they were perceived as to be possible outcomes of MTI.

6.1.1 Social and emotional interaction

One of the most prominent tendencies in the findings suggested that the parents found their children's social and emotional interaction in the Kurdish language to be a particularly valued and potential learning outcome of MTI. All of the parents interviewed expressed that they found these functions of the Kurdish language to be very valuable for their children's

socialization in Kurdish speaking family and community domains. That is, they found the functions to be particularly important for the children's socialization with the parents themselves, with their peers and family members in their countries of origin; as well as with friends and relatives in the Kurdish communities in Norway and Sweden. These perceptions can be related to Gardner and Lamberts' previously mentioned notion of integrative language attitudes (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). That is, the motivation to learn a language for integration with a particular speech community. Parents believed that their children's use of the Kurdish language was critical for their role-relations with members of the Kurdish speech communities. Furthermore, there was a strong tendency that suggested that the parents found the Kurdish language highly important for fostering emotive contact between the parents and their children.

When asked about how the parents perceived the value of their children learning the Kurdish language, all the parents, without exception, stressed the significance that this could have for fostering the bonds between their children and their family members in Iran or Iraq. In the majority of the cases the fathers are unable to visit their countries of origin due to their refugee status. Thus, the mothers travel to the countries together with their children to visit relatives. They all stressed the importance of maintaining their children's social connections with their extended families abroad. As a result, the social connections that the families have in these countries, as well as their integrative language attitudes, constitute the two major influential factors on the parents valuing of the social interaction functions of Kurdish. This was especially important to Lêzan and his wife, Lale, who often travel to and from Kurdistan and Afghanistan:

"I believe that because we are not originally from this country, we travel to Kurdistan and Afghanistan. For this reason, it is not only [Lale] and I. [Lale] and I we have mothers, we have fathers, we have relatives and acquaintances. So it is possible that Lale and I will understand when [the children] speak Swedish with us. If they do not know Kurdish or Afghani, they will not be able to speak with our parents or our relatives and acquaintances. [...] I would like him to know both languages so that he does not face any problems later when he goes for a travel or something else to his own country. So that there, he will be able to speak Kurdish or Dari" (Lêzan, Gothenburg).

Arman and his wife, Aziza, also related the relevance of their children's learning the Kurdish language to the maintenance of their son's ties with family members and friends in Iran:

“In the end, [Alan] has a relationship with Iran. [Alan] does in fact travel to and from Iran. When he has gone back, he has found friends. When he gets older, his interest will grow stronger, the relationship will grow stronger. It has happened that he has called them, they have called him, or just my parents, [Aziza]’s parents, uncles, aunts, he contacts all of them. For this reason, it will be very important for him to know the Kurdish language. If not, he could even very easily be bullied in Iran if he should go back and speak broken Kurdish. [...] We cannot distance him from the world of Iran, we cannot, it is not feasible, nor is it right. Because he has ties to that world, it is best if he has the means to sustain these ties, that he has the language to maintain a relationship with them” (Arman, Oslo).

As is evident in Arman’s viewpoints, the issue of bullying was raised, a topic that was expressed as a concern also by Farhad in Oslo and Karzan in Gothenburg. They believed that there was a link between poor language abilities and their children being bullied by their peers should they ever travel back to Iran or Iraq. Evidently, this is a concern that can be understood as an expression of integrative attitudes, as the parents believed that their children’s appropriate use of Kurdish in their role-relations with peers would contribute to them being accepted as members of the Kurdish speech community. That is, them being accepted as members of the Kurdish community via the use of the Kurdish language.

Hawin and Hajar, who live in Gothenburg, stressed the significance that the interactional function of the Kurdish language can have for their son’s confidence in himself as a Kurdish speaker. This perception can indicate that the parents found that this function could be contributory for their son’s subjective identity, that is, the way he perceives himself as a member of the Kurdish community.

“So when [we were there], when he saw that they were speaking in Kurdish, and that he had come from another country and knew Swedish and was able to speak Kurdish, he was very excited. That is, he enjoyed that very much (Hawin, Gothenburg).

Several other parents stressed the significance of their children knowing the Kurdish language for the communication between the children and the parents themselves, that is, the parent-child role-relationship. Gulala specifically emphasized this connection, as she found it extremely important that her sons learn and develop a strong Kurdish language proficiency so that the communication between them can be close and intimate in the future: “ [...] but it is very important to me, I would really like them to not only understand, but also leastwise be able to speak with us when they get older” (Gulala, Gothenburg). The same opinion was forwarded by Diana in Oslo:

"I always call my mother, I call her very often, I always ask her how she is doing, as the Norwegians put it, I 'følge med' [pay attention]. So, if my son's mother tongue will help to foster this feeling within him, if he is able to develop a stronger and closer relationship with his mother and father in the future, then, definitely, it will have an influence in this aspect" (Diana, Oslo).

In addition to associating social interaction with being a valued function for Kurdish language learning, the parents also accounted for an *emotive function* of Kurdish that they found highly valuable. This notion is related to Pavlenko's previously mentioned studies (2004; 2005) that underline the significant relationship between first language use and emotions in parent-child relations. Many of the parents expressed that the emotive connection between them and their children was best nurtured through the medium of the Kurdish language as they found that they could best express their love and affection for their children in this language. Some of the parents expressed that although they felt that they themselves could convey their feelings more easily in Kurdish, they believed that their children might not feel the same inclination. Some, thus, stated their hopes of their children developing strong enough knowledge in the Kurdish language so as to be able to not only understand their parents' expression of love in Kurdish, but also to be able to respond and return these feelings in the same language. Dildar was one of the parents who expressed this viewpoint very passionately as he perceived the Kurdish language as the language of love for him and his family:

"When he expresses his feelings towards me in Norwegian, I do not feel anything [...], it does not give me anything [...]. But when he comes and puts his arms around my neck and tells me 'baba gyan, xoshtem dahawet' [dear dad, I love you] I like it very much that he tells me in that language. [...] I really do enjoy that, and that is the reason why all my efforts are dedicated to teaching him the Kurdish language. Because I believe that this language that we have is the language we use for expressing our feelings, for expressing our love" (Dildar, Oslo).

Aziza shared Dildar's viewpoints and perceived the Kurdish language as more than a simple tool for communication between her and her son. She rather viewed the language as a medium that is charged with affection. For this very reason, she found it hard to connect with her son in the Norwegian language, as she believed that she could not convey her thoughts and feelings as easily in Norwegian. She found it important that her son learns the Kurdish language since this could make it easier for her and her son to know one another through the medium of a language that, she found, truly represents her feelings and her personality:

"Between us, between me and [Arman] and him, the things that I can express to him in Kurdish, I can never tell him in Norwegian [...]. That is why I want him to know the Kurdish language, so that he apprehends my feeling. In a while he will enter adulthood. If he then still does not know Kurdish, how are you going to carry a relationship with this child if he never gets to know you? It is important that he learns" (Aziza, Oslo).

As the findings indicate, it was evident that the parents believed that the social and emotive functions of the Kurdish language could be fostered in the contexts of MTI as many expressed that such instruction could reflect, complement and maintain their conscious efforts to ensure their children's' development of these functions within the realms of the family domain.

6.1.2 The social identity functions of Kurdish language

Some couples (two in Oslo, two in Gothenburg) were very concerned with the significance of the Kurdish language for their children's development of a sense of belonging and acceptance within Kurdish communities in Oslo/Gothenburg and Iran/Iraq. This valued language function is undoubtedly related to the parents' integrative language learning attitude (Gardner & Lambert 1979); as the their perceptions regarding the value of their children learning the Kurdish language was based on their hopes for their children's integration with Kurdish language communities. Accordingly, the social identity function of the Kurdish language was deemed valuable by the parents; they believed that their children's learning what constitutes socially recognized verbal behavior within Kurdish speech-communities would enable their children to negotiate their identities as Kurds in their various role-relations with members of Kurdish speech communities.

Dildar who lives in Oslo, and Goran who lives in Gothenburg both perceived the Kurdish language as an essential gateway for their children to become more knowledgeable about their ethno-cultural history as Kurdish people and for them to develop a feeling of belonging and acceptance within a larger community. In the following quote, Dildar explains why he feels that this function is valuable.

"In the end, a person must, first and foremost, know who he is, that is, he must know what his background is, what his language is, what his personality is. If a person does not know those things, it will be very difficult for him to proceed in many aspects of his life in the future. [...] This is why we try to help him so that he can, at least learn the language, because if one learns a language well, it becomes sweet [pleasing] to him. If you know a language well, you will go deeper into that culture [...]. In any case, all our efforts are put into truly ensuring that he learns that language, that it becomes sweet to him (Dildar, Oslo).

Goran explained that although he did not believe that the Kurdish language could serve a great instrumental purpose for his children's lives in the Swedish society, he believed it would play a vital role in them feeling like they are a part of a community that acknowledges and accepts them. He used an example to explain his viewpoint:

"In fact, they do need it [the Kurdish language]. [...]. A Swedish man who was my classmate, was learning the Swedish language. Later I asked him, I asked 'where are you from'? He answered 'I'm from Sweden', he was speaking with an English accent. I asked him 'then how come you do not know the Swedish language?' He cursed at his parents and said 'they did not teach me to read Swedish, I now hate that they made that decision'. For when he grows up he will lose his sense of belonging. [...] Regardless of whether or not we want it, our children are a part of that tribe, a part of that civilization, a part of that culture, a part of that collective. They will not be satisfied if they are incapable of speaking in their mother tongue. For no other language can replace his mother tongue. Later, he will become a stranger. Why? Because be it the Swedish or the English or anyone else, they will perceive him as a stranger. He will think 'I am a stranger in their eyes, and in relation to my own original language and my origin, I am also a stranger'" (Goran, Gothenburg).

With this statement, Goran expresses his fears of his sons feeling like outsiders in the Swedish society - because they are not accepted as Swedes -, as well as in the Kurdish community – because they do not know their mother tongue. It is also clear from this statement, that this function is closely linked to the emotive value of the mother tongue; as Goran automatically connects the two functions when explaining his views on how learning ones mother tongue and, thus, developing the ability to express ones feelings in that language, can affect one's sense of belonging. Lale and Lêzan expressed similar opinions as Goran when they were asked about whether or not MTI could have any benefits for their children's' future lives:

"The language will always be with them. [...] Later they will never be [...] they will not be separated or distant from their people. That is a very important thing for me as a mother. I believe for Lêzan as well" (Lêzan and Lale, Gothenburg)

Bafrin in Oslo shared the views of Dildar, Goran and Lale. She explained that she found it important that her daughter learned the Kurdish language as this would enable her to establish relations with members of the Kurdish community and become an integrated member of these communities– something she found to be very valuable to her daughters' life.

"She will be able to be a part of that world, the world of Kurdish because she will know the Kurdish language and she will have relations with Kurdish speakers. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, her family is Kurdish and our community is Kurdish-speaking [...], so it will be enjoyable for her to know that language" (Bafrin, Oslo).

Estera and her husband who live in Oslo had similar views to that of Bafrin. They expressed that, besides making conscious efforts to teach their children the Kurdish language at home, they also tried to engage their children in the broader Kurdish culture. In doing so, their children's sense of pride and belonging to the larger ethno-cultural Kurdish collectivity was believed to be enhanced.

"The more they are proficient in their mother tongue, the more they will strengthen their communal ties. Their identities will have a stronger basis. They will know themselves better, they will know where they have come from and where they are going. That is why we try to teach them the language, to expose them to [Kurdish] music and culture, and we take them to cultural events and celebrations. It is not enough though. That is just a drop in the ocean" (Estera, Oslo).

In this last sentence, Estera indicates that there was a belief that the parents' efforts to teach their children the Kurdish language in the family domain can fall short. MTI was hence perceived as to reflect, supplement and strengthen the parents' efforts in an indirect way by ensuring that the children develop strong verbal foundations for social interaction in Kurdish. Additionally, it was seen as a possible facilitator for the teaching of the Kurdish people's ethno-cultural history. Estera was thus in favor of education in Kurdish history and culture through MTI classes.

It is worth noting that there were two couples (Arman and Aziza in Oslo, and Karzan and Kalê in Gothenburg) who strongly opposed this viewpoint. They believed that the teaching of the history of ethno-cultural groups would inevitably be charged with the political interests of particular social groups. They believed their children should be spared of such curricula in their primary school age, and rather be taught in Kurdish language grammar, syntax and phonetics in MTI classes, that is, instruction in and through the Kurdish language rather than the Kurdish culture and history.

The third valued language function that the parents accounted for related to Kurdish literacy. This function overlaps the social identity function, as fostering reading and writing abilities in the Kurdish language through MTI, was believed to help children to understand, relate to, and identify with the printed ethno-cultural world of Kurdish. This belief is in line with the previously mentioned social approach to literacy in the New Literacy Studies theory (Street, 2003; Birr Moje & Luke, 2011, p. 416).

6.1.3 Kurdish literacy

The ability to read and write in Kurdish was for many parents a highly valued function. The Sorani dialect of the Kurdish language is generally written in the Perso-Arabic alphabet that is based on the Arabic script. The Kurdish alphabet is thus very different from the Norwegian and Swedish. When asked what they believe should be the purpose of providing MTI in primary schools, parents in Oslo as well as in Gothenburg provided the same answer: teaching basic literacy skills and grammar in the Kurdish language. It seemed that they perceived the development of this function as an essential part of learning one's own mother tongue at school. Jalil in Gothenburg believed that if his son developed these skills, the doors to the world of Kurdish culture, literature and arts that reside inside books would be opened to him:

“There are many children who speak Kurdish fluently, but they cannot read nor write, as there is no need for these skills. They live in Sweden and there is no need. But, it is good, it is an extra, it is in fact a plus if they can read and write. If they do, they will benefit, one takes pleasure in the language, literature, art, music, everything, when one reads and writes” (Jalil, Gothenburg).

In terms of the role of public MTI provision in Norway and Sweden for Kurdish literacy, Jalil argued that the Swedish educational system, unlike the Norwegian, was more ‘humane’. Hajar and Lezan also used the term ‘humane’ to describe the Swedish model of bilingual education in comparison to the Norwegian model. Hajar explained his understanding by pointing to the differences in eligibility requirements, whereby the Swedish model was favored; as it allows all children to receive instruction in their mother tongue throughout primary school, and not just as a temporary transitional program for some children. He favored the Swedish model as he regarded it to be a form of official recognition of the diverse linguistic repertoires that children bring into schools. Jalil based this statement on his belief that the Swedish model of MTI allows children to learn, comprehend and develop reading and writing skills in their parents’ language. He felt this would in turn result in better communication and comprehension between the two generations; something he believed the Norwegian transitional model does not facilitate. Ultimately, Jalil’s statement can be understood as a conceptualization of MTI as a facilitator of children’s Kurdish literacy acquisition, an opportunity for intergenerational continuity of Kurdish literacy, and a support for the maintenance of the social interactional functions that the language serves in the family domains. However, his quoted statement suggests that he did not believe that his son would

have any practical need for Kurdish literacy as a learning outcome of MTI in the Swedish society. This is an interesting finding that will be elaborated in section 6.2.3.

While Jalil saw the cultural gains of his son holding literacy skills in Kurdish, Estera in Oslo, and Kalê in Gothenburg underlined the instrumental benefits of learning these skills. The two mothers believed that it would influence their children's future employment opportunities if they should ever decide to travel back to Kurdistan. Interestingly, the occupational domains in Norway and Sweden were not perceived to be congruent with these skills. This will also be elaborated in section 6.2.3.

“It is very, very important in my opinion that a child is able to read and write because his language becomes even richer. If my child is able to read and write in Kurdish and has finished his degree here, he can easily take this with him and travel back to, and serve his own country. But, if he is not able to read and write, I am positive that he will not want to do so, because only a person who is able to read and write can serve his country” (Estera, Oslo).

Estera's perception illustrates a typical example of the second concept in Gardner and Lambert's theory of language attitudes, the *instrumental* language attitude. Gardner and Lambert explain it to be commonly held by individuals who are motivated by the practical purposes of learning a specific language, which, in this case, is the attainment of an occupation. However, Estera's viewpoints illustrate how instrumental and integrative language attitudes are interlinked, as her perception of the instrumental value of Kurdish literacy is connected to her hopes that her children will go back to be a part of the Kurdish society. This interlinking of both instrumental and integrative attitudes was also noticeable in Kalê's expression. She too stresses employment opportunities and integration with the Kurdish society in Kurdistan as a purpose for her son to learn the Kurdish language:

“For example, in the future, he might not want to use his educational degree for a job here; he might go back to our place [Kurdistan] and work there. If he does, he will face problems, we might get a feeling of inadequacy for example, if he is not able to read well or he is not able to make himself understood in the Kurdish language to the people there. All of these things are dependent upon the language” (Kalê, Gothenburg).

Besides the parents stressing literacy skills in Kurdish for cultural and instrumental purposes, there was another major factor which was granted much attention in the parents' reflections regarding why reading and writing in Kurdish was relevant, that is, linguistic oppression of the Kurds in Iran.

All the parents were asked which language they would choose for their children to learn in MTI classes (parents from Iran were asked if they would choose Kurdish or Farsi, parents from Iraq were asked if they would choose Kurdish or Arabic). This question was posed as there was reason to believe that some might choose a language other than their own mother tongue¹⁶. However, this suspicion was not confirmed as all the parents, with the exception of Bahman in Oslo, expressed that they would choose (those living in Norway), or they had chosen (those living in Sweden) Kurdish for their children. It seemed that particularly the parents from Iran used their personal experiences from attending primary schools as a basis for valuing Kurdish literacy as a learning outcome of MTI¹⁷. The following statement from Goran in Gothenburg gives an indication of these parents' experiences:

"We are Kurds from Iran. We could not, nor were we allowed to read or write in Kurdish. [...] This can be one of the reasons why reading and writing in Kurdish, never was established as a tradition or a habit amongst our people" (Goran, Gothenburg).

Several parents¹⁸ underlined this factor in their conceptualizations of Kurdish literacy as valuable and desirable. They had been deprived of the opportunity to learn and use literacy skills in Kurdish in primary school in their home countries where the medium of instruction had been Persian. This had ultimately resulted in them feeling more proficient and prone to using Persian rather than Kurdish. During the interviews with some of the parents, they recounted memories of how they had taught themselves to read texts in Kurdish and how they still struggle to write letters to family members in Iran, or read books in their mother tongue. These statements can be understood as manifestations of experienced language shift processes as they explain how the Persian language is preferred over Kurdish when it comes to the use of literacy for these individuals. Thus, the literacy function of the Kurdish language has been predominated by the Persian language. The fact that the parents have tried to teach themselves to use Kurdish literacy suggests that efforts have been made to counteract these processes of language shift.

¹⁶ During informal conversations with a Kurdish family member and an acquaintance from the Kurdish community, who both had been working as mother tongue teachers in Gothenburg, it was brought to my attention that some Kurdish-speaking families chose the Farsi language for their children to learn in MTI classes.

¹⁷ The parents who were brought up in Iraq had attended Kurdish-medium schools and did, thus, not share the same experiences and viewpoints as the Kurdish parents from Iran, as they had been taught to read and write in Kurdish in public schools.

¹⁸ Hawin, Hajar, Goran, Gulala, from Gothenburg, and Arman, Aziza, Farhad, Faranak, Bafrin, Esteran, Ebrahim from Oslo

As previously mentioned, it became clear that these personal experiences with linguistic oppression in Iran provided a form of basis on which the parents justified and conceptualized why learning Kurdish literacy skills through MTI was relevant for their children in Norway and Sweden. The parents expressed that they did not wish for their children to be victims of the same type of deprivation that they themselves had experiences due to a lack of opportunity to learn and use Kurdish literacy. The provision of MTI in public primary schools was perceived as a way of ensuring that this does not take place. The following statement from Hawin in Gothenburg illustrates the preceding tendency well:

“My mother tongue is Kurdish but I am only able to speak with my child in that language. I cannot, for example, help him with writing and those things. [...] But, if perhaps, he knows these things, in the future he might be able to do for his children those things that I have not been able to do for him” (Hawin, Gothenburg).

This statement suggests a positive belief in the intergenerational continuity of the Kurdish language, to which MTI was believed to be contributing. Moreover, it suggest a belief that MTI can function as a facilitator for reversing the language shift processes that has taken place in reference to the parents’ Kurdish literacy experiences.

The issue of Kurdish literacy was also raised in the interview with Bafrin and Bahman in Oslo, where the topic was passionately discussed as the divorced couple held conflicting viewpoints. Bahman believed, in contrast to Bafrin, that their daughter would benefit more from learning literacy skills in the Persian language rather than the Kurdish. He justified his views by, firstly, pointing to the lack of literature in Kurdish, and secondly, arguing that their daughter should develop the same level of proficiency in the Kurdish language as they have. Bafrin, on the other hand, disregarded the lack of Kurdish literature and explained that she wished for her daughter to learn Kurdish literacy as she believed that these skills would allow her daughter to express herself in the language with which she thinks. Thus, Bafrin stated that her daughter’s proficiency in Kurdish should not reflect that of hers, but rather exceed these. As a result, Bafrin’s viewpoints can also be understood as to be a perception of MTI as a facilitator for reversing language shift processes, as such instruction was believed to be an opportunity for the daughter to learn the Kurdish literacy functions that the mother had not been taught.

Bahman: *Mother tongue. I say that mother tongue is the language that her mother knows. Her mother speaks Kurdish, and reads and writes in Farsi. This is [Bahar's] mother tongue.*

Bafrin: *Therefore, in your opinion, it is of no necessity at all that she learns Kurdish.*

Bahman: *In my opinion, she has learned Kurdish to that degree...*

Bafrin: *And so that is enough for her.*

Bahman: *...to the degree where it regards mother tongue, she has learned it. Her mother only knows that much.*

Bafrin: *Her mother only knows that much *Bafrin laughs and Bahman and S start laughing too*.*

Bafrin: *Her mother only knows that much, but let her know more then *keeps laughing**

(Bafrin and Bahman, Oslo).

Like Bafrin, Arman and his wife also expressed that they would send their son to MTI classes in Kurdish if they were given this opportunity. As this opportunity is not provided by the public educational system, they were discussing private initiatives. Aziza recounted how some of her Persian acquaintances had collectively initiated informal lessons in Persian for their children in the weekends. Aziza was describing this very passionately and expressed that such an initiative would be a great opportunity for Kurdish children as well. Arman agreed, but he was not optimistic due to the very fact that Kurdish literacy was not well established amongst Kurds from Iran:

"They have that opportunity. And I know that if we had not studies in Farsi, if we had studies in Kurdish, and learned the language, we would surely think of something similar. Our problem is that if we should now decide to open a Kurdish school or class, it would be truly hard for us because we have not learned that much Kurdish. We have not learned Kurdish at school in order to be able to teach it. There is a great difference between learning something at home, and learning something scientifically. When you learn something scientifically, you can teach it. I know that this is one of our problems as Kurds from Iran. Now, Kurds from Iraq study Kurdish at school, surely they experience it differently" (Arman, Oslo).

While Arman's last sentence rightfully suggests that the Kurds from Iraq might not face the same difficulties as the Kurds from Iran due to them having been taught in Kurdish in public schools, his overall reflexions illustrate how the historical and political oppression of the Kurdish people can have grave intergenerational consequences for the general continuity of the Kurdish language. The findings however suggest that MTI can be a form of remedial opportunity to reverse this development.

6.1.4 Instrumental functions of Kurdish for language acquisition

There was a clear awareness in both cases of the role that a high competence in the mother tongue plays for learning other languages. This understanding is related to Cummins' previously mentioned *developmental interdependence hypothesis* (1979) that stresses the importance of first language maintenance as a strong foundation in L1 can result in high competence in L2. It was clear that the parents perceived MTI as a springboard for a strong foundation in their children's mother tongue – a foundation that was believed to later enable the children to learn other languages more effectively. It seemed that the parents were highly familiar with this matter as they repeatedly stressed this issue when asked about the value of learning Kurdish in MTI for their children's future lives. Some referred to research when justifying their conviction, like Kalê in Gothenburg.

“They have discussed this issue in Sweden that if a child's has a strong mother tongue, he will be strong in the Swedish language as well. It is important to them too that they know their mother tongues, so that they can use it at school as well” (Kalê, Gothenburg).

Faranak in Oslo referred to conversations with teachers or other caretakers within the education system:

“When a child goes to kindergarten and you take him to see the public health nurse for a check-up, they always ask you ‘do you speak your mother tongue with him or Norwegian? That is, they insist on the importance of the child learning his own mother tongue” (Faranak, Oslo).

These statements firstly suggest that there is a positive discourse about the significance of MTI within the public sectors in both Norway and Sweden; a discourse that is in line with scientific findings. Secondly, Faranak and Estera's statements suggest that these discourses affect the parents' perceptions of MTI.

As an extension of this viewpoint, there was a clear tendency in both cases towards the conviction that knowing an extra language, regardless of which language it might be, can have an intrinsic value to the individual. Arman, for example, stated the following: “I want [Alan] to learn the Kurdish language. I also want him to learn the Farsi language, and the Turkish and the Arabic. In the end the more languages he knows, the better it will be for him” (Arman, Oslo).

Other parents expressed that knowing many languages can be a great asset when traveling in different countries, as this can ease communication. However, Jalil in Gothenburg, did not only see the communicative values of knowing many languages, he passionately expressed that knowing a certain language can enable one to identify with the culture, the people, the arts, the literature and the media to which the language belongs. He argued that knowing several languages, allows the individual to become a member of different language groups – an ability he perceived to be very valuable. In so doing, Jalil, like several of the other parents, illustrated integrative attitudes towards his son learning the Kurdish language.

“When an individual learns a language, it defines him as an individual. As an example, I myself, I know five languages [...]. When I travel to a county, I understand their culture, I understand their music, I understand their literature, right? News and other things I hear, that countries politics, I understand it. That is, I am another individual. It is the same thing when I return to Sweden; I understand the culture, the music, the art, the literature, I am another individual. If I travel to Kurdistan, I am yet another individual. All of these things have resulted in the reason why learning languages is a positive thing” (Jalil, Gothenburg).

This instrumental function of the Kurdish language, as well as the other four preceding functions represent the how the relevance of MTI was perceived in terms of valued learning outcomes as valued uses with which the Kurdish language was associated.

6.2 Perceived relevance of Kurdish language in domains

This section provides an account of the tendencies in the findings that pertain to research question 1b, that is, the for *where* aspects of valued learning outcomes of MTI. In light of Fishman’s theories, the theoretical category *domain* was set as a determinant for this aspect, which was understood as the *societal institutions with which the participants commonly associate and value Kurdish language functions*.

6.2.1 The family domain vs the official domains in Norway and Sweden

As was suggested in section 6.1.1, the immediate family domains was the domain in which the Kurdish language seemed to be perceived by the parents as to be the most relevant and prevalent language of use. This viewpoint seemed commonsensical amongst all the parents in

both study sites as the Kurdish language was identified as the dominant language in their home environments. Several of the parents explained this viewpoint by comparing the position of the Kurdish language with that of the Norwegian language in both their own, and their children's' lives. Bafrin did so by comparing the position that Kurdish has in her life in Norway, with the position it held for her whilst living in Iran:

“I think that when I was in Iran, my language [the Kurdish language] was of no great value. Kurdish was only used in the home environments, for leisure, these things. So when it came to formal matters, you had to know Farsi. This was the thing, you had to know and be able to speak Farsi. If you did not speak Farsi, you would not be able to get anything accomplished. And now, here, the Norwegian language has taken the position of the Farsi language for me. Here too, my mother tongue is only in the home, around family. When I go outside, I have to know Norwegian. If I do not know Norwegian, I fall short” (Bafrin, Oslo).

Bafrin's reflexions illustrate very clearly that the Kurdish language was perceived as to be a minority language in terms of holding a very low status in formal society. On the other hand, she also identified it to be the dominant language within the parents' and their children's informal and family environment. As such, Bafrin's perceptions underline Fishman's notion of diglossia (1972; 1991) as her statement illustrates how one language, Kurdish in this case, can be associated with the informal and private family domains, while another language, Norwegian, is associated with the official domains. Bahman expressed similar viewpoints. He explained how he and his children associate all matters concerning family life and issues related to the home environment with the Kurdish language, while all matters that take place outside the home environment were communicated in Norwegian:

“I usually speak Kurdish with the children. But, when, for instance, my son recounts something from kindergarten [...] he automatically tells it in Norwegian. I then, often respond in Norwegian. But when we talk about matters concerning home, and our own things, it is in Kurdish” (Bahman, Oslo).

These quotes from Bahman and Bafrin's interview are two examples of one of the unequivocal tendencies in the findings related to the position of Kurdish: all the participants perceived, respectively, the Norwegian and Swedish languages as the expected language for formal, official domains, while Kurdish was perceived as that for the family domain. It seemed that their associating the Scandinavian languages with the official domains was a reflection of what they commonsensically believed was the *lingua franca*, that is, the standard official language of formal life.

Gulala and Goran's perceptions in Gothenburg, can underline this tendency as they described the Swedish language as the language they associated and found important for integration in general society in terms of work and social interaction with Swedish speakers. When asked about which languages they use with their children in the home, they responded, as many others, "Kurdish, naturally".

The majority of the couples expressed that they spoke Kurdish in the family domain with the purpose of teaching their children the language. This general tendency can be understood as an illustration of *family language policies*; which Kendall King and Lyn Wright Fogle (2013) describe as to be related to "child language learning and use as functions of parental ideologies, decision-making and strategies concerning languages and literacies, as well as the broader social and cultural context of family life" (op.cit., p. 173). The findings suggested that the way the Kurdish language is used in the context of family life was based on the parents' strategies and wishes for their children's Kurdish learning. One family in Oslo, Estera. Ebrahim and their children, had a somewhat strict language policy in their family context. They had even gone to the lengths of prohibiting the use of Norwegian inside their home. When their children were born, they had decided that the Kurdish language would be the only language to be spoken in their household, as they believed that this would ensure their children learning the language efficiently and thoroughly – something they believed they had indeed achieved.

Arman and Aziza from Oslo, expressed that, like Estera and Ebrahim, they too had made conscious efforts to make their son speak Kurdish with them in order to facilitate a nurturing environment for their son's Kurdish language learning. Arman stated that MTI could be an extension and support for their efforts:

"In my opinion it will be a support. We make an effort at home, we speak Kurdish with him and I always tell him '[Alan] gyan, Kurdi' [dear Alan, Kurdish] for example when he speaks Norwegian. So if there was [MTI] at school, it would definitely support what I am working on achieving with him at home" (Arman, Oslo).

It seemed that the most influential factors on the parents' association of the Kurdish language with the family domain were language emotionality and the social identity functions of their children learning Kurdish. These influential factors on this particular perception were identified when the parents were explaining how and why they valued language emotionality and social identity functions the way they did. That is, the family domain was the social space

with which they conceptualized the functions. Kalê, for example, explained that her sons preferred to use the Kurdish language at home, as this was, as her youngest had expressed, ‘their language’ as Kurds. Thus, the children themselves found Kurdish as the expected and congruent language for their family role-relations.

“Even the child is of that conviction. [...] Earlier, when I used to pick him up from school, I used to think that he would not understand everything if I spoke in Kurdish so I used Swedish words so that he would understand. He would get angry. He would say ‘When we are at school, it is of no issue if you speak Swedish with the teachers. But when we are home, when we leave school, you are not to speak Swedish with me. [laughs] You have to speak Kurdish because we are Kurdish” (Kalê, Gothenburg).

It is apparent from the example told by Kâlê that her son’s use of the Kurdish language with her, a member of the Kurdish language-community, can for her son be an expression of social belonging and request for acceptance as a Kurdish person. Accordingly, the Kurdish language’s social identity function can be understood as to have great value for facilitation within the family domain.

However, although the majority of the parents expressed that they made great efforts to ensure that their children learn the Kurdish language within the family domain, they believed that the Swedish and Norwegian languages were more predominant in their children’s lives. Jalil and Jalila, for example believed that their son perceived the Swedish language as more valuable in his life as this was the language he was the most exposed to in his various role-relationships: that is, with his friends, with teachers, with media-channels etc. Arman explained his similar viewpoint on this matter as follows:

“When it comes to family matters, it is the Kurdish language that is important. But when it comes to [Alan] himself, the outside, school, his future, work and those issues, I believe that the Norwegian language is important” (Arman, Oslo).

This issue was the second major tendency in the parents’ viewpoint as all portrayed the same conviction: Kurdish was perceived to have a lower position within the larger Norwegian and Swedish speaking official domains. Thus, the parents did not find the Kurdish language as to be congruent with habitual use in the role-relations that were deemed most prevalent in their children’s current and future lives in these contexts.

One parent did however express a different and more positive view of the future position of the Kurdish language in the official domains. Farhad in Oslo explained that the educational

system could play a vital role in catering for what the Norwegian public commonly and proudly refers to as the ‘multicultural’ society. He believed that through MTI, the government can cultivate, nurture and benefit from the country’s linguistic diversity within its public official domains. Farhad expressed this viewpoint as an expectation from the government. However, his viewpoint was unique, as none of the other parents illustrated any form of indications of the same expectation of recognition for the Kurdish language’s functions within the higher governmental or occupational domains in Norway and Sweden.

6.2.2 The extended family domain – in Norway/Sweden and Iran/Iraq

Besides valuing Kurdish language functions for the domain of the family, many of the parents expressed that they believed their children’s development of proficient Kurdish language skills would be of value to them within their Kurdish speaking community domains; and their extended family domains.

Several of the families had close relatives living in, amongst others, Germany and Canada. The parents believed that whilst in these countries, where neither Kurdish nor the Norwegian or Swedish languages are predominant, the children would communicate in Kurdish whilst playing with their peers, or speaking with their relatives. Interestingly, none of these parents seemed to consider the English language as to be relevant for their children in such settings, as they did not mention anything about this language. Arman was one of these parents:

“When we travel to Sweden, [...] England or to Germany he will meet other children. They will not know Norwegian so therefore he will have to speak Kurdish. This is why I make effort to ensure that he learns Kurdish too” (Arman, Oslo).

Dildar as well as Gulala in Gothenburg, proudly recounted stories of how their family members had been surprised and impressed by their children’s abilities to speak and comprehend Kurdish in these social settings. Their statements indicated that the parents perceive their children’s proficiency in the Kurdish language as to have important value in the extended family domains that they take part in when visiting family members abroad.

Some parents (Lale and Lêzan in Gothenburg, Dildar, Bafrin and Ebrahim in Oslo) believed that knowing the Kurdish language would also be of value to their children within their Kurdish community domains in Norway and Sweden:

“Here, in terms of social relations with individuals from the same language community, yes, he can use it” (Dildar, Oslo).

Kurdish language value in this context was understood in terms of social interaction functions with Kurdish-speaking peers and family members. Ebrahim found this to be very important as he had many family members in Oslo, while Lale believed that the Kurdish language would enable her children to establish relationships with Kurdish-speaking peers in Gothenburg.

Besides these two domains, as the elaborations in section 6.1.1 suggested, the context where the parents saw the greatest value of their children knowing the Kurdish language was in the extended family and community domains that the children encounter on their visits to Iran and Kurdistan, Iraq. When asked about whether or not they believed that MTI in Kurdish would have any significance in their children’s future lives, the parents often envisaged their children’s use for the language in communication with distant family members, acquaintances and peers in these countries. As was mentioned in 6.1.1, the major influential factor on this perception was the parents’ social connections to family members and acquaintances in Iran and Iraq. Moreover, the parents’ statements regarding this matter also seemed to be influenced by integrative language attitudes as they stressed the importance of their children’s functional use of the Kurdish language for integration with the Kurdish-speaking family and community domains in Iran and Iraq. They believed that their children’s abilities to use the language appropriately would determine how they would be accepted as members of the Kurdish speaking community, that is, them being accepted as people of Kurdistan.

6.2.3 The occupational domain – in Norway/Sweden and Iran/Kurdistan, Iraq

In regards to the use of the Kurdish language in occupational settings in Norway and Sweden, the findings suggest that there was a strong and clear tendency in the parents’ viewpoints towards an understanding of the Kurdish language as to hold a very weak, if any, position within the occupational domain. With the exception of two parents, the participants expressed directly, or indirectly that they perceived the Kurdish language as to not hold any form of instrumental value for their children’s employment opportunities in Norway or Sweden.

The two parents who did assign value to their children’s Kurdish language skills for occupational domains in Norway, were Bafrin and Farhad in Oslo. However, Farhad

expressed this position after being specifically asked whether or not he believed that his children's Kurdish language acquisition could have any value for the Norwegian society:

S: In your opinion, can your children's capabilities in the Kurdish language, not only oral but also in written, be of any value to the Norwegian society?

Farhad: Yes. For example, if she develops these capabilities, she can translate Kurdish materials into Norwegian. Countries make use of each other's histories: they gain wisdom. There are so many historical and social issues, and Kurdish novels that she can translate into Norwegian.

S: Yes, so for an occupation as a translator.

Farhad: For example, that is only one example of the occupations where my child's Kurdish language skills can help to serve the Norwegian society
(Farhad, Oslo).

Bafrin expressed, without any specific reference to the Norwegian labour market, that her daughter's Kurdish language skills could be useful for her in any future occupation:

"For example, tomorrow [Bahar] may become a journalist, maybe she wanted to become a journalist. It would be very enjoyable for [Bahar] to then, be able to write in Kurdish, it would be a great asset. Or, if she becomes a doctor for example, it will be very enjoyable for her to know Kurdish. That is, whatever she decides to become, her language will be useful for her" (Bafrin, Oslo).

Bafrin and Farhad were the only ones to explicitly associate the Kurdish language with the occupational domains in Norway. One may argue that these statements can be understood as to be expressions of a desire for the Kurdish language to hold an instrumental value for occupational purposes as much as they are expressions of the possibility of it being so. Nevertheless, none of the remaining participants expressed a similar viewpoint to that of Farhad and Bafrin. Based on impressions during the interviews, it is possible to speculate as to why this was the case. Perhaps the parents themselves did not have any experiences with role-relations in the public domains where Kurdish was the norm, and that they thus found it difficult to envisage how their children could make use of the Kurdish language in this domain. Not surprisingly, the parents did explicitly state that they associated the Norwegian and Swedish languages as the dominant and prevalent languages within this particular social space. This might suggest that the way the parents were perceiving the Kurdish language's position within the occupational domains in Norway and Sweden, was yet again influenced by what constitutes the standard official language in these contexts.

It was particularly interesting that the Swedish participants held this view, as the Swedish educational system, as an official public domain, provides and facilitated Kurdish language learning. One might assume that for this reason the Kurdish language would be more positively associated with the official domains in Swedish society than in Norway. The findings however suggest that the position of the Kurdish language was regarded as to be very low within the Swedish occupational domains. As in Norway, Jalil's quoted statement in section 6.1.3 about his son's improbable need for Kurdish literacy in Sweden illustrates this tendency in the findings. Hajar and Gulala in Gothenburg expressed similar perceptions:

"In Sweden, it is of no importance which language one is able to write in, be it Kurdish or Farsi. Because, neither Kurdish, nor Farsi is of any usage here" (Hajar, Gothenburg).

As Hajar's perceptions illustrate, the Kurdish language's low position was defined in terms of it not having any practical use, as Gulala tries to explain in the following excerpt:

"In my opinion, I do not think that it has any importance in this society, that it, here it does not have any usage for them, [...] it is of no value to them. With value, I mean that it has no usage" (Gulala, Gothenburg).

In Oslo, Aziza and Arman underlined the low position of the Kurdish language within the occupational domain in Norway during their discussions of the positions of different languages in their son's future life. Arman stated that he believed the most significant language in their son's life was that which surrounded him the most, Norwegian. He then stated that this was the prevalent language in his son's future professional world in Norway. Aziza was of the same conviction as she also believed that the Kurdish language would not hold a strong position within this domain:

"Here, no. His future is here and in the end, he will speak Norwegian. [Knowing the Kurdish language] will not have any value here if you consider him working and living here" (Aziza, Oslo).

Estera was yet another parent in Oslo who expressed this viewpoint. However, it was particularly interesting that she held this belief as during our interview, she mentioned on different occasions that she herself had made use of her Kurdish mother tongue in the context of her occupations in Oslo. For example, she recounted that she had held a position with one of the urban districts in Oslo as a bilingual assistant for Kurdish-speaking children in a kindergarten over two years. One of the fundamental requirements of such an occupation is

that one is fluent and highly proficient in the Kurdish language. Despite the fact that she, herself had attained this position on the basis of her being able to speak and comprehend the Kurdish language, she explicitly expressed that she did not see how her children's learning Kurdish could benefit their positions in the labor market in Oslo, or the Norwegian society in general. One can argue that this may be due to the predominant monolingual discourse that promotes the Norwegian language for all matters related to the occupational and higher governmental domains.

"They will not have any practical use for it if they just stay here" (Estera, Oslo).

As Estera's statement suggests, she did however believe that her children could use their Kurdish language skills in another context: namely the occupational domain in Kurdistan, Iraq. She indeed, hoped that her children would choose to one day, move back and make use of their language abilities, and the competences they developed through the course of their education in Norway, to serve their "own" people in Kurdistan, Iraq. She thus believed that her children could be a resource for the Kurdish labor market as long as they knew the Kurdish language. As was mentioned in section 6.1.3, several parents shared Estera's convictions. Lale, like Estera, expressed that learning the Kurdish language could be valuable for her daughter if she decides to travel to Kurdistan, Iraq to serve her people:

"It [the Kurdish language] can be of great usage in her life in that she can help her own people. It might be that tomorrow, [Leyla] decides to go to Kurdistan to work [...]. The language would make this easy" (Lale, Gothenburg).

Jalil also forwarded this perception and points to the fact that his son's technical skills and his Kurdish language proficiency could serve a great value to, not only himself, but also the Kurdish society which is in need of a strong labor force due to its constant growth:

"It is in fact a competence, it is a plus, I do think so. He is growing up here in Sweden. I do not think that he will live or settle in Kurdistan, I do not know. But it would be good if he should attain a job in Kurdistan when he is a bit older, why not? [...] I have a friend who is almost settled in Kurdistan. And you know, there are many opportunities in Kurdistan, it is constantly developing. The universities need much more knowledge and a lot more advanced and developed systems, you know. Now, my son is an expert in Mac apps. When we saw my friend, he said 'there are a lot of opportunities for you in Kurdistan. Just go there for six months and teach students in programming and those things'. But, if you do not know the language, you can't" (Jalil, Gothenburg).

Farhad was yet another father who believed that his children might one day travel to Kurdistan to serve their people, whereby he believed that the Kurdish language would be of a critical position for their attaining an occupation:

“Tomorrow that boy will be an adult, that girl will be an adult, you will become a doctor, right? It is not certain that you will be working in this country. It might be that, tomorrow your own country will have need for you. It might be that you serve that country [...] If you do not know the language of that place, what will you be able to accomplish?” (Farhad, Oslo).

These statements and Kalê’s viewpoints from section 6.1.3 indicate that the parents held differing perceptions in regards to the possibility of their children traveling back to Kurdistan. While Aziza was convinced that this would not be an option for her son, and Jalil was insecure of this possibility for his son, Farhad, Lale, Estera and Kalê believed that this might be a probability, whereby the Kurdish language was perceived as to be a gateway for their children’s ‘return’ to Kurdistan.

In the discussions regarding the position of the Kurdish language in occupational domains, an interesting distinction was found. That is, Kurdish was believed to be relevant for the official and occupational domains in Kurdistan, Iraq, but not in the official or occupational domains in Iran. As the preceding statements by Lale, Estera, Farhad, and Jalil indicate, the Kurdish language was commonly associated and valued for their children’s attainment of employment in the occupational domains in Kurdistan, Iraq. However, the parents who conceptualized the relevance of their children’s Kurdish language skills in Iran did not believe that their children would have use for it in the occupational nor the official domains in this context, as Persian was perceived to be the predominant language in these settings. The previous quote from the interview with Bafrin illustrates this notion very clearly as she explains that Persian was the language that was commonsensically associated with the official domains in Iran:

“I think that when I was in Iran, my language [the Kurdish language] was of no great value. Kurdish was only used in the home environments, for leisure, these things. So when it came to formal matters, you had to know Farsi. This was the thing, you had to know and be able to speak Farsi. If you did not speak Farsi, you would not be able to get anything accomplished (Bafrin, Oslo).

These viewpoints are clear reflections of the differing political status of the Kurdish language in these two countries – in Kurdistan, Iraq it has the status as an official regional language, whereas in Iran it is unrecognized and prohibited in public space.

Thus, it can be argued that the influential factors on these perceptions were, as with the occupational domains in Sweden and Norway; the *lingua franca* or standard official language in these contexts. These influential factors, as well as the general findings accounted for in these preceding sections will be summarized and discussed in the following chapter.

7 Summary, discussion and conclusion

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the topics from the findings. Section 7.1 concentrates on a general discussion of some of the most predominant tendencies. Section 7.2 will then provide a discussion on some of the major themes in light of the study's theoretical frameworks, that is, in light of Fishman and Bourdieu's theories.

7.1 The relevance of MTI to K.r.p

One of the central aims of this study was to provide an understanding of how K.r.p in Oslo and Gothenburg perceive the relevance of MTI for their children in primary school. The notion of relevance was understood as what parents have reason to value. In light of this overarching purpose, research questions 1a was aimed to highlight for *what* learning outcomes, understood as language functions, the parents found MTI to be contributory to. Research question 1b was aimed to elucidate for *where*, that is, which societal institutions associated with the Kurdish language, the parents believed MTI could contributory to. The second aim of this study was to provide an understanding of the factors that influence perceptions regarding these issues. The following sections provide a summary and discussions of the findings that elucidate these questions.

7.1.1 Four valued Kurdish language functions for four domains

In order to investigate for what valued learning outcomes MTI was perceived to be relevant, the analysis of the findings was guided by Fishman's theoretical concept of language functions. This concept was understood as valued language uses with which the Kurdish language is associated. In light of this understanding, the following four language functions were identified to be valued by the participants: (1) *social and emotional interaction*, (2) *the social identity function of Kurdish language*, (3) *Kurdish literacy* and finally, (4) *instrumental functions of Kurdish for learning languages*. No major differences were found between the two study-sites in terms of how these functions were perceived, that is, the participants in both study sites accounted for these specific four functions. This ultimately suggests that the relevance of MTI was perceived equally in both study sites even though the provision of the

instruction is different. The reason why this might be the case will be discussed in section 7.2.2.

Fishman's concept of domains guided the analysis of the findings that helped to highlight with which social institutions the parents associate and valued their children's use for the Kurdish language's functions. These were found to be (a) *the family domain* in Norway/Sweden, (b) *the extended family domains* in Norway/Sweden and Iran/Iraq, (c) *the Kurdish speaking community domains* in Norway/Sweden and Iran/Iraq, and finally, (d) *the occupational domain* in Kurdistan, Iraq. It was not possible to trace any significant differences between the perceptions of the participants in Oslo and those in Gothenburg in regards to this matter either. That is, the participants in both sites seemed to conceptualize the use of Kurdish equally for these particular domains.

The factors that seemed to have been influencing the way the parents were conceptualizing and understanding the valuable learning outcomes and domains with which Kurdish language was associated were (a) their *integrative and instrumental language learning attitudes*, (b) their *social connections*, (c) their *language emotionality* and, for some, (d) *linguistic oppression in Iran*. On the issue of influencing factors, one significant difference was found. This was between the parents who had originated from Iran and those who had originated from Kurdistan, Iraq. When it came to their children learning Kurdish literacy through MTI, the parents from Iran based their conceptualizations of relevance on their experiences from linguistic oppression in Iran. The parents who originated from Kurdistan, Iraq did not show any signs of being influenced by this specific factor in their accounts of how they perceived MTI. This was due to them simply not having been faced with the same experiences in primary schools in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The following figure summarizes the general findings that elucidate the study's overarching research questions, i.e. *how do K.r.p. perceive the relevance of MTI for their children in primary school*, and *what factors influence the parents' perceptions regarding these matters*. It is important to underline that there are mutual influences between the language functions, the domains and the influential factors as the conceptualization of one aspect is unavoidably interlinked to the other aspects.

Table 2 Perceptions on the relevance of MTI.

Valued Kurdish language functions	Domains associated with Kurdish language
Social and emotional interaction as valued learning outcomes of MTI	Family domain Extended family domain Kurdish-speaking community domain
<u>Influencing factors on perception:</u> integrative language attitudes language emotionality social connections	
Kurdish social identity as valued learning outcome of MTI	Extended family domain Kurdish-speaking community domain
<u>Influencing factors on perception:</u> integrative language attitudes social connections to countries of origin	
Kurdish literacy as valued learning outcome of MTI	Occupational domain in Kurdistan, Iraq
<u>Influencing factors on perception:</u> instrumental language attitudes linguistic oppression in Iran	
Language learning as valued learning outcome of MTI	
<u>Influencing factors on perception:</u> instrumental language attitudes integrative language attitudes	

Out of the four language functions that were identified, the most valued one is social and emotional interaction between the children and the parents, the children and their extended family members, and the children and members of the Kurdish community both in Norway/Sweden as well as in Iran/Iraq. Accordingly, it became clear that the social connections the families have to their relatives in Iran and Iraq is highly relevant for the way they perceive the value of their children's learning the Kurdish language as this interaction is perceived to be dependent on Kurdish. These connections seemed to provide a basis for the parents' integrative language attitudes (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Norton Pierce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2005) as the Kurdish language was understood to be a significant key to children's integration with informal Kurdish-speaking domains and role-relation. Ultimately, the notion of social identity, which has been a common interest to sociolinguists who have established its connection to language (Heller 1991; Ochs 1988; 1993; Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin; 2012), was underlined in the findings. The data indicates that great efforts are made by the parents to ensure that their children learn Kurdish for the purpose of their children's opportunities to negotiate their identities as Kurdish people through the Kurdish language

within their various role-relations with other Kurdish speakers in their valued Kurdish-speaking domains. This ultimately explains why the social identity function was so strongly emphasized by the participants.

The function that was stressed for the maintenance and strengthening of the role-relations between parents and their children in particular was related to Kurdish language emotionality. Pavlenko's previously mentioned studies (2002; 2004; 2005; with Dewaele 2001-2004) support the parent's emphasis on this matter as Pavlenko's studies have established that there is a connection between parents' first language emotionality and their preference for this language in their emotional speech acts with their children in diaspora contexts. Pavlenko explains that this emotionality is connected to underlying autobiographic memory associations and the negative and positive arousals that may be evoked by a certain language. Through Pavlenko's investigations of how these instances affect parental language choice in parent-child communication; it was found that "perceived language emotionality is an important factor for many parents, both in overall language choices and in choices made for particular emotion speech acts" (Pavlenko, 2004, p. 189). In light of this, Pavlenko explains that that parents who are "raising their children in the LX environment at times find themselves unable to interact with the children in a language that is not the language of their own childhood and does not have appropriate affective connotations" (LX meaning a second/third language) (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 134). Pavlenko's findings thus support why the participants in this study feel that their mother tongue is the language that allows them to truly express their affections in emotion speech acts with their children. Furthermore, her findings explain why the participants do not perceive the Norwegian and Swedish languages to have the same affective connotations as the Kurdish language. Ultimately, the findings suggest that the emotional function of the Kurdish language is perceived to not be replaceable with Norwegian or Swedish. On the contrary, the data indicates that the maintenance, cultivation and protection of this function for the family domain is highly significant, as the desire for children's adoption of this function is emphasized in the findings.

The third language function that the data indicates to be highly regarded is Kurdish literacy. This function, like social interaction, is also found to be related to identity. Although there were few participants who stressed this aspect, there were some tendencies towards it being perceived as significant for children's subjective identities. This is due to the instrumental aspects of literacy that enable children's access to and knowledge about the ethno-cultural

history and literature of the Kurdish people. Since the 1980s, there have been many studies that have focused on the link between literacy and identity (Birr Moje & Luke, 2009). Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toohey's (2002) understanding of this link can support the parents' perceptions as it underlines the impact written texts can have on the way individuals perceive themselves and the authors of the texts. The positive and negative inclinations of this understanding can be discussed in the infinite. However, in the contexts of this study, the general tendency in the findings suggest that these aspects of literacy learning are undesirable and should not be emphasized in the public provision of MTI, as it may be considered to provide bias 'truths' that are politically charged.

The recent conceptualization of the phenomenon of literacy is focused on the instrumental aspects of what people do with it and think of it (Street, 2003). Furthermore, it is conceptualized in light of power relations whereby literacy is understood as a means for social empowerment and mobility, or societal oppression and domination. The findings in this study underline this conceptualization. Firstly, they indicate a connection between linguistic oppression of opportunities for literacy learning (in this case exercised by the Iranian government) and intergenerational language continuity. Secondly, they suggest that literacy learning is evaluated on the basis of its instrumental purposes, in this case pertaining to occupational attainment. Viewing the findings in light of the latter aspect of literacy indicates that these two aspects are indeed interlinked. That is, the findings indicate that Kurdish literacy is perceived to only be valuable for the occupational domains of the Kurdish region in Iraq and not in Iran, where the language is prohibited. Thus, the tendencies in the finding suggest that the instrumental value of Kurdish literacy for the younger generation is restricted, as it relies on the limited domains of Iraqi, Kurdistan. In terms of its value within the occupational domains in Norway and Sweden, the findings suggest no positive inclinations. This notion will also be elaborately discussed in light of Bourdieu's theories in section 7.2.2.

The language function that was the least stressed, in terms of it being the least elaborated but commonly mentioned across the interviews, was related to the instrumental function of the Kurdish language for learning other languages. The perceptions related to this function are arguably connected to Cummins' theory of developmental interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1979). That is, the maintenance and fostering of children's' mother tongues through MTI for the purpose of their easy acquisition of other languages was explicitly emphasized through the interviews. This belief was commonsensical and prevalent in the

discourse in both cases. The fact that the linguistic mismatch hypothesis was completely absent is, in itself, an interesting point as it suggests that the pessimistic discourses about bilingualism from the early 60s are untraceable, both among the parents and in the official domains. As mentioned in section 6.1.4, the parents' perceptions might be influenced by the positive discourse about bilingualism that they encounter in the public domains, such as children's health centers. Moreover, their perceptions may be due to the availability of information materials that pertains to this specific issue, i.e. internet sites (Tema Modersmål, Tema Morsemål) and brochures (Skolverket, retrieved 18.10.2013; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). Based on Farhad's statement in section 4.2.2¹⁹, one may speculate that the valuing of this function might also be influenced by personal experiences with the impact of having weak foundations in a first language for second language acquisition.

Despite the general tendency of the above mentioned functions being highly valued, particularly for the maintenance of the families' social connections and the children's social identities; the data suggests that the belief in the continuity of these functions is somewhat pessimistic. The participants' viewpoints indicate that the efforts to facilitate children's Kurdish learning within and through the private domains are perceived to be, in Estera's words, 'a drop in the sea'. This is due to the quite commonsensical belief that the Norwegian and Swedish languages have and will have a more predominant position in children's lives compared to Kurdish; as these languages are congruent with several more, larger official domains in the Norwegian and Swedish societies with which the children have many affiliations. Furthermore, there seems to be no strong belief in the possibility that the children will travel back to Kurdistan where the Kurdish language is found to be more useful for both integrative and instrumental purposes in all domains. In the midst of these relatively pessimistic views, there were however some indications of hope as the children's own efforts to maintain the use of the Kurdish language for their subjective perceptions of themselves as Kurdish people were underlined. Moreover, MTI was perceived to be a significant support for the maintenance of the valued function and thereby the social connections and domains for which they are used.

The findings indicate that the primary responsibility and the most significant condition for the fulfillment of the valued functions are perceived to be reliant on the family domain. Thus,

¹⁹ His recount of how he received beatings for not being able to pronounce the Persian word for ostrich due to his incorrect association of the term with a Kurdish word for camel, which he believed was because of him not knowing the Kurdish word for ostrich.

MTI is understood to be an indirect, yet important contributory facilitator to the families' efforts. Its primary purpose is generally perceived to be the teaching of the Kurdish language that in turn might contribute to the maintenance of the valued functions and role-relations in children's lives. However, one may argue that the role of MTI is perceived to be specifically important for facilitating Kurdish literacy as the findings indicate that this function was believed to be best fostered within a formal educational context, rather than within the home environment. Furthermore, the findings indicate that for some parents, MTI might be the only opportunity to ensure children's literacy learning, as this function is not, in the words of Goran, "a tradition or a habit" for parents from Iran due to them having been deprived of the opportunity to learn these skills. Thus, in such instances, it may not be possible to facilitate this function within the private, unofficial domains.

In addition to the general perception of MTI as a contributory facilitator for children's Kurdish learning, there seems to be a belief that MTI can also be a form of recognition of the parents' efforts in the family domain. That is, by teaching and using the language that is used and taught within the family domain, in the public official domain of the educational system, MTI can be a form of recognition of what takes place within the home environment. However, the findings suggest that in order for MTI to have this recognition-based function, it needs to be provided as a maintenance-based model as this is perceived to best facilitate and reflect the efforts that are made by the families.

Consequently, the Norwegian model is understood to be less recognizing than the Swedish model, as it is based on a transitional program that aims for minority language shift. Such a program thus counteracts the families' efforts rather than recognizing and supporting them. The Swedish model, on the other hand, is generally understood as to be more in line with the maintenance model. This is primarily due to it being perceived as to be more 'humane' in terms of it being more including of the linguistically diverse characteristics of primary school children. As a result, one can argue that the general perceptions in this study suggest that the current maintenance model for MTI in Sweden is more favored than the transitional model in Norway. One may speculate as to why this tendency was found in both sites on the basis of the general similarities in how the relevance of MTI was perceived. It may be that because the parents valued the same learning outcomes of MTI, they also desired the same means to achieve these outcomes.

7.1.2 Similar perceptions of MTI, different influential factors

The comparative aspect of the study was primarily related to the study sites, i.e. Oslo and Gothenburg. As has been stated in the preceding discussions, there were no significant differences between the two study-sites in term of how MTI was perceived, this despite there being a fundamental systemic difference in the educational provision of MTI. At the macro-levels, this might be due to the fact that even though the practical provision of MTI and the right to MTI is different in Norway and Sweden, these countries share arguably similar monolingual language ideologies at the policy levels. Thus, it can be argued that the similar discourses on MTI in the two sites may have been more influential on the parents' perceptions than the different practical provision of MTI in the sites. Section 7.2.2 provides an elaborate discussion of how this influence may have taken place. At the micro-levels, the similarity in the perceptions of MTI across the study-sites can be explained in terms of the participants having similar cultural, social and political backgrounds as Kurdish people, which may ultimately have influenced the way MTI was perceived similarly. However, this may be unlikely, as the only significant difference which was indeed traceable in the findings was a difference that was related to the participants' backgrounds, that is, between the participants who originated from Iran, and those who originated from Iraq.

One may speculate as to why the relevance of MTI was indeed perceived in such a relatively homogeneous way in light of the extensive literature that have, in one way or another, investigated language. On the one hand, one can argue that this is due to the existence of a universal foundation for what constitutes the value of language. Particularly within the field of linguistic anthropology and ethnography (Duranti, 2009; Ottenheimer, 2009), the topics that pertain to language are often recurrent, that is, identity, emotions, interaction, social space etc. Despite these topics having been conceptualized, altered and re-conceptualized along with the evolution of the social scientific fields, they still prevail as significant phenomena of human language, as they are parts of our fundamental existence as social beings. Thus, when one investigates the relevance of learning a language in terms of its valued aspects, be it within the educational framework or any other approach, one inevitably investigates what constitutes the fundamental aspects of learning a language. As they are fundamental, they can be regarded as universal to the general human population, regardless of context. This can explain why the participants in this study perceived the relevance of their children learning the Kurdish language through MTI similarly. That is, because they, as social beings, all share

some of the very fundamental conceptions of language use and its value. On this basis, it is possible to argue the study's transferability, as it touches upon some specific topics that have been emphasized and recurrent in the sociolinguistic field, i.e. identity, social space, social interaction, literacy etc. On the other hand, one may argue that these so-called universally valued and fundamental aspects of language learning may not be so universal as they might be valued differently due to contextual differences. The difference in the findings of this study that related to how linguistic oppression was an influencing factor for the perception of MTI, underlines this argument.

Ultimately, this line of discussion revolves around whether or not it is possible to conceptualize a universal understanding of what constitutes the relevance of language learning on the basis of an integrated constructionist approach. If this is to be possible, contextual sensitivity is significant. As the discussion of the findings suggests, this study touches upon some of the well established topics that have been studied within the various scientific fields and disciplines of sociolinguistics. To my knowledge, there is however no one overarching theoretical framework that integrates all of these interrelated topics under the unifying notion of 'relevance' that relates to language or education. Perhaps it will be possible to develop such framework through an investigation of what constitutes the relevance of language learning within an educational context, understood as what individuals have reason to value. This study has scratched the surface of such an attempt, as the work that is required for the development of such a framework requires a much more extensive study scope. In that case, the capability approach (Tikly & Barrett, 2011; 2013) would be a possible starting point as it already provides an understanding of relevance that is individually oriented.

7.2 Theoretical implications

This section's two sub-chapters concentrate on a discussion of the findings in light of Fishman's theories on language maintenance, language shift and reversing language shift (7.2.1) and Bourdieu's critical theory of symbolic power and symbolic violence through education (7.2.2).

7.2.1 MTI as a contributory support for Kurdish language maintenance

As was accounted for in chapter 3, Joshua Fishman's theories will be applied in the following discussion as a help to provide an understanding of how the perceived relevance of MTI can be understood as perceptions of an opportunity for maintaining the Kurdish language's functions and domains within the larger competing Swedish and Norwegian language contexts.

Initially, in light of Fishman's theories of what constitutes a threatened Xish-language, one can argue that Kurdish can be understood as a threatened language in Norway and Sweden; as the findings indicate that the language is perceived to be in the process of having fewer user and few functions while at the same time it is being associated with small and unofficial societal domains. This can be supported by the participants' account of the relatively few and limited language functions and language domains that the Kurdish language is associated with. Nevertheless, viewing the findings in light of Fishman's *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* plan (GIDS), one can argue that the three initial stages of maintaining a threatened language are however secured.

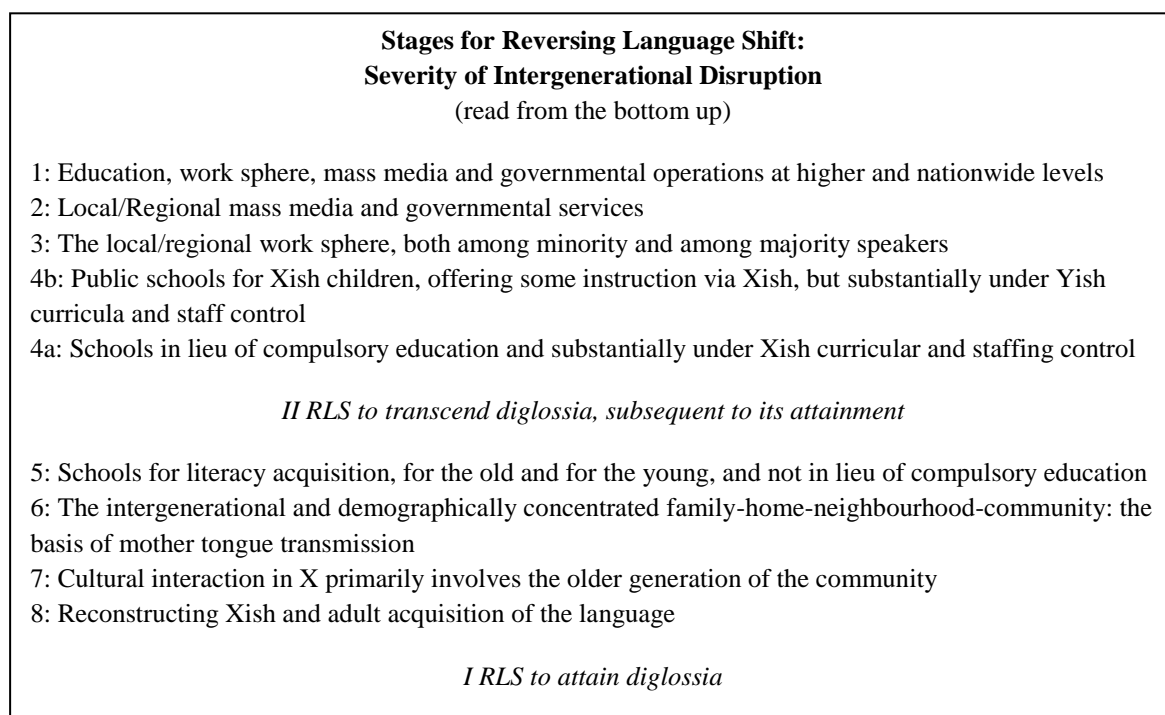


Figure 1 Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (1991, p. 395).

Fishman stresses that in order for there to be any chance of intergenerational language continuity, stage 6 in the GIDS plan must be covered, that is, the stage whereby the functions of the threatened language is used within the family and community domains, and protected from the threats of the languages that are congruent with the governmental domains. On this basis, one can argue that intergenerational continuity of the Kurdish language is probable for the participants in this study. This is due to the findings suggesting that the functions and domains that are perceived to be congruent with Kurdish are highly valued, cultivated and protected by the participants within the family and extended family domains in Norway/Sweden, as well as in Iran/Iraq. At the same time, the functions of the Norwegian and Swedish languages for the official domains in children's lives are acknowledged and valued. Consequently, one can argue that the general tendency in the findings suggests that the notion of 'bilingualism with diglossia' is desired, as the valued functions and private domains of the Kurdish language are well-defined and protected from the 'threats' of majority language influences, while the Swedish and Norwegian language functions are reserved for their congruent official domains.

However, the data indicates that while strong efforts are made for the preservation and maintenance of the Kurdish language's functions and domains the stability and continuity of these are regarded unlikely for the younger generation. This is due to the findings indicating that there is a belief that the position of the majority language will outdo the Kurdish language in the children's future lives in Norway and Sweden. This is despite an optimistic view on the younger generations' continuation of the social identity function of Kurdish. The factors that contribute to this belief will be discussed in section 7.2.2. In light of this tendency, one may argue that the intergenerational continuity of the Kurdish language, in terms of its number of future speakers, is indeed perceived to be threatened in the face of the Norwegian and Swedish languages.

Going back to the GIDS plan, Fishman argues that securing stage 5 will secure intergenerational continuity. This entails broadening the functional periphery of a threatened language to include literacy through unofficial, community-based instruction in the language for and by speakers of the language. The finding suggest that the Kurdish literacy function for the younger generation is indeed desirable. However, as was mentioned earlier, the findings also suggest that securing this function through private initiatives, i.e. through stage 5 and 4a might be a challenge, particularly for Kurds who have migrated from Iran, as the older

generations' literacy skills are perceived to be too weak. On this basis, one can argue that public provision of MTI, i.e. stage 4b, can be regarded as an important opportunity for the facilitation of children's Kurdish literacy learning. This can in turn contribute to the maintenance of the Kurdish language's literacy function.

Moreover, the findings indicate that such public provision can be a facilitator for reversing language shift. The data suggests that the participants who have originated from Iran have experienced language shift processes as the Persian language is favored over Kurdish when it comes to reading and writing. In light of the findings, one can argue that for these participants, MTI can be a means for reversing Kurdish language shift as it can prevent intergenerational displacement of Kurdish literacy. In other words, MTI can prevent continuation of the older generations' Kurdish language shift to the younger generation.

In light of these tendencies, one can argue that there is a desire to exceed beyond Kurdish language maintenance within private, unofficial domains, i.e. to move beyond stage 5. Thus, public recognition and support for such an endeavor within the official domains is arguably preferred. However, the tendency in the findings suggest that this pursuit remains within the framework of the 'bilingualism with diglossia'-notion, as the instrumental value of the Kurdish language for occupational purposes is not be perceived as to be congruent with upper governmental or occupational domains in Norway and Sweden. Thus, the public educational provision of MTI in Kurdish is found to be the highest official domain with which support and recognition of Kurdish language maintenance is expected. The question that thus arises is whether or not this form of recognition is believed to be found within the current educational domains.

As was discussed in section 7.1.1, the bilingual model that the findings suggest to be the most favored is the maintenance model that is most congruent with the Swedish policies on MTI.

In light of these findings and Sally Boyd's (2011) previously quoted description of the language policies in Sweden (section 4.1.2), one can argue that the Swedish educational policies best cater for the fulfillment of the participants' wishes for 'bilingualism with diglossia'. This is due to the aims of the policies being, in Boyd's words, "to maintain a basically monolingual Swedish discourse in the public sector [...], while multilingualism is related to the private sector (the concept of 'home language') and limited, marginalized parts of the public and independent school offerings" (p. 151). However, it is possible to discuss whether it is the educational system that reflects the wishes of this minority language

population, or if it is the minority language population that reflects the policy discourses. This discussion will be provided in section 7.2.2.

In regards to the Norwegian context, one can argue that the notion of ‘bilingualism with diglossia’ is unrealized. This is due to the pervading transitional model that does not cater for functional bilingualism or the maintenance of the valued Kurdish language functions and its concomitant domains. The Norwegian policies rather aim to foster subtractive language learning for the purpose of minority language shift and monolingualism for national unity (Pihl, 2009; 2010). This is despite the formulations in policy documents that suggest positive inclinations of multilingualism as a valued resource (St.meld. nr. 6 (2012-2013)).

In terms of how the perception of MTI as a possible facilitator of reversing language shift pertains to actual educational contexts, one can argue that for the Norwegian educational policies, the perceptions are unrealized. Here, the predominant transitional model does not give any room for cultivation of the valued Kurdish literacy function, which in turn contributes to further intergenerational displacement of the Kurdish language. Thus, one can argue that the Norwegian policies reinforce language shift rather than preventing it. In Sweden, however, the situation is arguably different due to the maintenance based educational policies which facilitate children’s Kurdish literacy learning, and ultimately, facilitates for a reverse of the language shift that has taken place with the older generations of Kurdish speakers.

However, although the Swedish educational policies in this respect may seem to be more adapted to reversing language shift rather than contributing to it, it is possible to argue that the educational system still contributes to a shift in the use of the Kurdish language. This can be argued on the basis of the monolingual discourses which undergird the language policies in the country in general. Ultimately, this can explain the findings’ strong tendency of a pessimistic prognosis for the intergenerational continuity of the Kurdish language’s functions and domains. This tendency can be understood in light of Bourdieu’s critical theories of symbolic power and violence.

7.2.2 Cultural reproduction through symbolic violence

The aim of this section is to provide a discussion of how relevant Bourdieu and Passeron's notions of symbolic power and symbolic violence is for the way the relevance of MTI is perceived by the participants in this study.

As was accounted for in section 3.3., symbolic violence takes place when the dominant language of the elite is transmitted and imposed on those who are dominated in a manner that is inexplicit and concealed. Bourdieu and Passeron explain that the educational institution contributes to symbolic violence as it imposes and cultivates students and parents' recognition and legitimation of the official language. This is done through the various pedagogical processes that (a) control access to specific material and immaterial forms of capital, and (b) promote the official language as the legitimate language of governmental and occupational domains. Students and parents abide by this social order as they perceive this to be necessary for social and occupational mobility.

As the discussions in section 4.1 stated, the educational policies of MTI in Norway and Sweden have been undergirded by nationalistic ideologies supported by monolingual discourses (Boyd, 2001, 2007, 2011; Pihl, 2009; 2010). In light of Boyd and Phil's studies (op.cit.), it is possible to argue that these macro-level processes are translated in the countries' public educational provision of MTI. Ultimately, the educational systems in Norway and Sweden are promoting a recognition of Norwegian and Swedish (respectively) as the standard and legitimate languages of the official and occupational domains. In other words, the educational systems are exercising symbolic violence. In light of Fishman's theories, this can be explained as societal situations of 'bilingualism without diglossia', that is, when bilingualism exists but there is no system-wide recognition, acceptance or arrangement for the maintenance of the functions of more than one legitimate language. As a result, there is a conflictual relationship between the majority language of the government domain. In this case Norwegian /Swedish, and threatened language, Kurdish, as the former will replace and displace the functions of the latter, in this case through public education.

In Norway, this has taken place through the educational system's provision of transitional bilingual models of MTI. This model can be understood as to be supportive of symbolic domination and violence as it fosters subtractive language development and cultural and linguistic assimilation of members from language minority groups for the purpose of

achieving monolingualism. There is thus no recognition of private efforts to maintain minority languages within the educational system. On the contrary, the replacement of these languages with the Norwegian language is rather promoted. In Sweden, MTI is provided as a subject of choice that is generally organized as a separate lesson outside of regular school schedule (Vetenskapsrådet, 2012, p. 56). This suggests that minority languages are not recognized within the regular curricula of the general educational institution. Within the regular school schedule, the Swedish language predominates. This can explain the findings which indicate that, even though the Kurdish language is actually facilitated and used within the public educational domain, the language is perceived to be incongruent with the occupational or governmental domains in Swedish society. Thus, the excluding structural organization of MTI may have caused the participants to perceive the instruction, and thus the Kurdish language, as an excluded part of the official Swedish speaking domains.

Ultimately, it is possible to assert that the participants in this study may have been subjects of symbolic violence that promotes monolingual language ideologies in favor of the Norwegian and Swedish languages. This argument can be supported on the fact that the findings indicate that the participants have accepted and recognized the Norwegian and Swedish languages as the predominant languages in their children's official and occupational domains. Thus, the Kurdish languages' functions are not perceived to be of any instrumental value within these domains for the younger generation. As a result, one can argue that it is the participants who have been influenced by the language ideologies of the state in the way they perceive the relevance of MTI, rather than the other way around. This can be supported by the fact that with the exception of one parent, none of the remaining 19 participants seemed to illustrate any signs of believing in a possible change in this social order, that is, they did not believe that the position of the Kurdish language within the governmental and occupational domains can be altered.

Furthermore, the argument of the participants having been subjects of symbolic violence can explain why the intergenerational continuation and maintenance of the Kurdish language's functions and domains are viewed pessimistically for the younger generation. The findings suggest that there is a belief that the processes of symbolic power will prevail in the future as there is a strong belief that the Norwegian and Swedish languages will, in the end, displace the functions of the Kurdish language for the younger generation. Thus, the social order will be reproduced. This pessimistic view on the survival of Kurdish seems to overshadow the

significance of the social identity function of the Kurdish language for the maintenance of the language in children's lives. The tendency in the findings suggest that despite the parents' efforts and wishes for their children to feel like integrated members of the larger Kurdish ethno-linguistic community, this function was not believed to be maintained in the face of the Norwegian and Swedish language functions. This can again support the line of argument, as it suggests that the dominant position of Norwegian and Swedish is perceived to eventually displace and replace the position of the Kurdish language for children's identity formations.

However, this understanding may be disputed in light of Ochs's previously mentioned studies (section 2.2) (1988; 1993; Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin; 2012). Ochs's argues that our understandings of what constitutes socially recognized verbal behaviour and verbal display of attitudes for different social domains influence the way we construct, and constantly negotiated out identities. Accordingly, social identities are constantly shifting and negotiated in different social settings. Thus, children's ethno-linguistic identities as members of the Kurdish community need not be completely displaced by Norwegian/Swedish if the language is still employed. This ultimately relies on the degree to which the language is maintained and facilitated for social interaction, which the findings indicate is indeed stressed as one of the major valued functions of the Kurdish language.

Thus, although the symbolic powers that are permeated in the educational institutions may have contributed to a construction of a view of the Kurdish language being incongruent with official domains it has not contributed to a complete abandonment of a belief in its relevance and survival within unofficial domains. The findings thus suggest that the maintenance of Kurdish is still highly regarded, and a complete language shift is not perceived to be desirable or necessary for social mobility. For the protection and maintenance of the Kurdish language's functions and domains for the younger generation, individual bilingualism with diglossia is desired. As such, MTI is perceived to be a possible indirect contributory support for this maintenance as long as it is organized as a maintenance-based model that is integrated with general school curricula.

It is evident from these discussions and the general findings that there is no significant difference in how the relevance of MTI is perceived in the national contexts of Norway and Sweden. However, when this relevance is conceptualized within the contextual framework of Iraq, the picture is significantly different; particularly the perception related to the Kurdish language's position in occupational domains. As was accounted for in section 4.2.2, in this

country, the northern Kurdish regions have been granted autonomy and Kurdish is recognized as an official regional language in the Kurdistan Regional Government. As a result, there is societal acceptance and arrangements for the maintenance of the Kurdish language's functions within governmental and occupational domains within this particular region of Iraq. Thus, the language is faced with very little conflicts or threats from the majority language of Arabic. Rather, it is valued and promoted within all domains of the Kurdistanian region. This can ultimately explain why Kurdish was perceived to be more congruent with the occupational domain within this context, than in the occupational domains in the Norwegian and Swedish contexts.

As a result, one can argue that a minority language, or a threatened language, need not be perceived as a language that is restricted to the realms of unofficial life. Through regional language autonomy, nation states can facilitate bilingualism with diglossia. However, a retrospect of the Kurdish peoples' historical struggle to achieve such regional autonomy illustrates how challenging such a task can be in the face of strong nationalist ideologies.

7.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to present a constructionist understanding of what constitutes the relevance of mother tongue instruction from a user perspective, namely Kurdish refugee parents. Furthermore, the study aimed to provide an understanding of whether or not this relevance can be perceived differently in different contexts. Through in-depth interviews with ten couples in Oslo and Gothenburg, this study has investigated these issues through a capability based understanding of the notion of relevance.

In terms of the study's comparative aspect, the findings indicate that differing contextual environments does not seem to result in differing perceptions of the relevance of MTI. At the macro levels, this may be due to the fact that although the practical educational provision of MTI is different in Oslo and Gothenburg, the political discourses are arguably similar. At the micro levels, this may be explained on the basis of the Kurdish language holding a value that is shared by all the participants as it relates to some fundamental aspects of language use, i.e. for identity construction, social interaction, literacy etc.

The findings suggest that the perception of MTI relevance is closely related to the value that the Kurdish language is perceived to have for the parents and the children's family and

community domains in Oslo/Gothenburg and Iran/Iraq. That is, a value pertaining to social and emotional interaction, Kurdish social identity construction, Kurdish literacy and second language learning. The data indicates that perhaps the most significant influential factors on the perceptions of MTI is the families' social connections to their countries of origin.

The primary responsibility and most significant condition for the fulfillment and maintenance of these valued aspects of Kurdish language use is perceived to be reliant on the efforts of the family domain. However, there is a strong tendency that indicates a view that these efforts are not enough for the maintenance of Kurdish in children's lives in Norway and Sweden. In light of this, MTI is perceived as an indirect, yet important contributory facilitator of the families' efforts. The role of MTI is particularly important for teaching Kurdish literacy as this task is likely to be challenging for Kurdish people from Iran within their private domains. This is due to them having experienced language shift processes whereby a strong competence in Kurdish literacy has not been developed. In this respect, MTI can play a dual role, on the one hand it can have a significant role for facilitating this competence for the younger generation, and on the other hand it can contribute to a disruption and reverse of a possible intergenerational Kurdish literacy displacement.

The perceived relevance of MTI calls for a maintenance-based bilingual model whereby the valued uses and domains of the Kurdish language can be maintained through additive language development. Moreover, the perceptions call for bilingualism with diglossia. That is, a situation where there is societal acceptance and arrangement for the protection of the Kurdish language's usage in private domains, while the Swedish/Norwegian languages are reserved for the governmental and occupational domains. Thus, the public educational provision of MTI in Kurdish is found to be the highest official domain with which support and recognition of Kurdish language maintenance is expected.

The predominant language ideologies in Norway and Sweden show that the realization of this desired situation might be challenging due to prevailing monolingualistic orientations. However, a discourse change seems to be taking place within the policy formulations whereby the notion of diversity is viewed more positively, especially in Norway. For example, in the recent 2013 Report to the Storting (St. meld., 2012-2013) on the national incorporation strategies of immigrant minorities in the country, it is explicitly stated that the country's linguistic diversity should be perceived as a resource and cultivated within the public educational domain. Moreover, the Research Council of Norwegian recently provided

funds for the establishment of the Center of Excellence, *The Center of Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan* (MultiLing) (University of Oslo, 2013), which has been granted a mandate to provide scientific knowledge about opportunities and challenges of multilingualism. This suggests an openness to the notion of linguistic diversity being a societal resource. These developments might contribute to a future realization of what the findings in this study has called for, i.e. a societal arrangement where minority languages are recognized, cultivated and protected within the official domains of the Norwegian and Swedish society.

This study has approached the topic of MTI relevance by providing an understanding of the valued *outcomes* of such instruction. In order to develop a more holistic understanding of the topic, it would be interesting to explore what individual users value in terms of MTI's quality aspect related to curriculum and pedagogy. Another approach that might be contributory for a more holistic approach to bilingual education relevance is a capability based theoretical study that aims to provide a normative framework that integrates the various valued aspects of language learning for individual speakers.

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Appendices

A. Interview guide for Norwegian participants

PART 1 QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE IN GENERAL - English

- 1.1. What do you consider to be **your mother tongue**? Why?
- 1.2. What **language(s) do you and your family use** in the home?

To elaborate:

Which languages do you use in the different contexts you encounter in your everyday life? In what context do you use; Kurdish, Norwegian/Swedish, Language X, Z? Do you feel more confident when using specific languages? Which ones and why?

- 1.3. How is the **Norwegian language significant** for you?

PART 2 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE

- 2.1. What are your **thoughts on your own mother tongue**?
To elaborate:
Does it have significance to you? What and why?
How do feel about the Kurdish language compared to the Norwegian/Swedish language?
- 2.2. Would you say that it is **important for you to preserve your mother tongue**? Why?
- 2.3. What do you consider to be **the mother tongue of your children**? Why?
- 2.4. How do you think **your child perceives the Kurdish** language?
- 2.5. How would you describe **your child's linguistic abilities** in Kurdish?
 - 2.5.1. How do you feel about this?
To elaborate:
Have you purposefully used the Soraní language at home; dialog, books/movies/music, travel, inclusion of children in Kurdish social gatherings
 - 2.5.2. Would you say that it is **important for you that your child learns and knows the Kurdish** language Why?
- 2.6. In your opinion, **how significant is the Kurdish language in your child's life compared to other languages?**
To elaborate:
In which contexts do you think Soraní will be relevant for your child?

PART 3 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION

- 3.2. What **opportunities** are provided for your child in **primary school** as regards **mother tongue**?

In Norway, your child is entitled to MTI only if he/she is not sufficient in Norwegian. The schools will use his/her MT at school with the purpose of developing the child's Norwegian language.

3.2.1. **What are your thoughts regarding this issue?**

3.2.2. Do you feel that the Norwegian **education system caters for your wishes** regarding MTI? Why?

3.2.3. **Would you like to change anything** when it comes to the current provision of MTI? Why?

In Sweden, immigrant children are entitled to MTI as a subject of choice at primary school. They can attend classes with other children who speak the same language. The classes take place out of the ordinary school schedule and they are voluntary.

3.3. What are your thoughts regarding this issue?

3.4. If you had the opportunity, would you have sent your child to MT classes? Why?

3.5. In your opinion, what is **the value of your child having the opportunity** to learn his/her mother tongue at school?

That is, what is the value of this opportunity? Does it have any value at all?

3.5.1. Do you see **any difficulties** related to this?

3.5.2. In your opinion, **what do you think should be the purpose** of such instruction?

3.6. In your opinion, **can MTI benefit your child** in his/her future life? How?

3.7. In Sweden, some parents chose Farsi for their children in MT classes.

If you had the choice, which language would you choose for your child to learn in mother tongue classes? Why?

PART 4 QUESTIONS ON SCHOOLING AND LANGUAGE

4.1. Could you tell me a little bit about how you picture the future life of your children?

4.2. As parents, what do you perceive to be the purpose of schooling? Why?

PART 1 QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE IN GENERAL - Kurdish

- 1.1. Che zoanek ba zoani daiki xot azani? Bâtcha?
- 1.2. Ewa wa xanawadetan che zoangalek estefade akan la malow?

To elaborate:

Masalan la che zoangalek estefada akan la sharaiaatgal moxtalef la zndagi harrozhatan?

La che sheraiaatgalek zoani; kordi, Norwezhi/Sâedi language X ba kar ahenen? Hitch zoane has ka waxte ba kari teren fratr ehsasi rahati kan takia? Tche zoangalek wa bâtcha?

- 1.3. Ahamjati zoani norwezhi bo ewa chas?

2. PART 2 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE

- 2.1. La mowredi zoan daiki xotan che fekrekan akanow?

To elaborate:

Ahmjateki has bâtan? Che ahmjatek wa bâchi?

Nasartan la mowred zoani kordi la moqajsa tak zoani Norwezhi/Sâedi chas?

- 2.2. Atwanen bezhn ka hefzkerden wa parapejdani zoani daiki bâtan mâhem has ja nyja? Bâcha?

- 2.3. Che zoanek ba zoani daiki mnalakatan azanen? Bâcha?

- 2.4. Ba nazar ewa, mnalakatan che didgajki has la mowred zoani kordiow?

To elaborate:

Mnalakatan zoani Sorani chon tmasha aka, che nazareki has la mowred zoani sorani?

- 2.5. Tawanmandigali mnalakatan la zoani kordi chân tâwsif akan? (Che tawanmandihajeki has?)

- 2.5.1. Che ehsasektan la mowred amawo has?

To elaborate:

Agadarena la zoani sâranitan estefada kerda/akan la malo? 'Eamdan le ktew, mosiqi, filmi kurdi estefada akan bâ taqwijatkrndi zoani sârani mnalakatan? Mnalakatan awan bâ djam'eagal ya kâbonawagali kordi?

- 2.5.2. Bâtan mâhema ka mnalakatan zoani kordi fer bet wa bzanet? Bâcha?

- 2.6. Ba nezer ewa, zoani Sorani chane mohema la zndagi mnalakatan ba nesbat ba zoangal ter?

To elaborate:

La che zaminagaleka fkr akan ka zoani sorani ba dard mnalakatan axoa?

3. PART 3 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION (tadriskrdni/ferkrndi zoan daiki)

- 3.1. La madrasai eptedaiia/sarataiia che frsatgale has bâ awaika mnalakatan zoani daiki fer be?

La Notwezh, mnalakatan haqi tadriskrdni zoan daiki has agar tawanai zoani norwezhi kam be. Madrasakan zoani daiki mnalaka estefada akan ba aow hadafa ka mnalaka zoani Norwezhi fer be.

3.1.1 Ewa nazartan chas la mowred am chta?

3.2.1 Ba nazar ewa, systemi amozeshi Norwezh arazogali ewa bā tadriskrdni zoan daiki barawarda akat? Bācha?

3.3.1 Ewa haz akan hiche la systemi imroii tadriskrdni zoani daiki bgāren?

La Sāeda, hache mnali xarijia la madrasai eptedaii, haqi tahsilkrdni zoan daiki xojanijan has wako darseki entexabi/janebi. Mnalakan achna am klasgala tak mnalgal ter ka zoan daikan jekeka. Klasakanish jian la dargali tri madrasa, jani am klasgala hana pal dasi klasgali asli madrasa.

3.2. Nazartan chas la nowred am chat?

3.3. Agar ewa aow frsatana bwait, mnalakatan anard bā klasi tadriskrdni zoan daiki? Bācha?

3.4. Awaika mnalakatan frsati awaibwe ka la madrasa zoan daiki ferbe, ba nazar ewa che arzsheki has?

Jane, am frsata che arzsheki has? Aya arzsheki has ja na?

3.1.1 Ewa hich moshkle awinen la am chta?

3.2.1 Ba nazar ewa, tadriskrdni zoan daiki la madrasa ashe che hadafeke be?

3.5. Ba nazar ewa, klassi tadriskrdni zoan daiki atwanet hitch manfa'eateki be bo zndagi ajandai mnalakatan? Chān?

3.6. La Sāeda, ba'eaze daiko bawk, zoani farsi entexab akan bā mnalakanijan la klasi zoan daiki?

Agar ewa emkani awatana bwatai, che zoanektan entaxab akerd bā mnalakatan wak zoani daiki ka la madrasa fer bet? Bācha?

4. PART 4 QUESTIONS ON SCHOOLING AND LANGUAGE

3.1. Akrje tāze la mowred awa qsa bkan ka ewa che taswirektan has la zndagi ajandai mnalakatan?

3.2. Ba nazar ewa wako daiko bawke, tahsilkrdn che hadafeke has? Bācha?

B. Interview guide for Swedish participants

PART 1 QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE IN GENERAL - English

- 1.1. What do you consider to be **your mother tongue**? Why?
- 1.2. What **language(s) do you and your family use** in the home?

To elaborate:

Which languages do you use in the different contexts you encounter in your everyday life? In what context do you use; Kurdish, Norwegian/Swedish, Language X, Z? Do you feel more confident when using specific languages? Which ones and why?

- 1.3. How is the **Swedish language significant** for you?

PART 2 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE

- 2.1. What are your **thoughts on your own mother tongue**?

To elaborate:

Does it have significance to you? What and why?

How do you feel about the Kurdish language compared to the Norwegian/Swedish language?

- 2.2. Would you say that it is **important for you to preserve your mother tongue**? Why?
- 2.3. What do you consider to be **the mother tongue of your children**? Why?
- 2.4. How do you think **your child perceives the Kurdish** language?
- 2.5. How would you describe **your child's linguistic abilities** in Kurdish ?

- 2.5.1. How do you feel about this?

To elaborate:

Have you purposefully used the Kurdish language at home; dialog, books/movies/music, travel, inclusion of children in Kurdish social gatherings

- 2.5.2. Would you say that it is **important for you that your child learns and knows the Kurdish** language? Why?

PART 3 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION

- 3.1. What **opportunities** are provided for your child in **primary school** as regards **mother tongue**?
- 3.1.1. **Are you content** with these opportunities? Why?

To elaborate:

Do you feel that the education system caters for your wishes regarding MTI? Why?

Would you like to change anything when it comes to the current provision of MTI? Why?

Do you see any difficulties related to this?

- 3.2. In your opinion, what is **the value of your child having the opportunity** to learn his/her mother tongue in primary school?

That is, what is the value of this opportunity? Does it have any value at all?

In Norway, immigrant children are only entitled to MTI if they are not sufficient in Norwegian. The schools will use their MT at school with the purpose of developing the child's Norwegian language.

- 3.3. What are your thoughts regarding this issue?
- 3.4. In your opinion, **what do you think should be the purpose** of such instruction?
- 3.5. In your opinion, **can MTI benefit your child** in his/her future life? How?

If the parents have chosen MT classes in Kurdish for their children:

I have heard that some parents in Sweden choose Farsi for their children to learn in MT classes.

- 3.6.a. What are your thoughts regarding this issue?

If the parents have chosen MT classes in Farsi for their children:

- 3.6.b. Why did you choose Farsi for your children and not Kurdish?

3. **PART 4 QUESTIONS ON SCHOOLING AND LANGUAGE**

- 3.7. Could you tell me a little bit about how you picture the future life of your children?
- 3.8. As parents who have children in school, what do you perceive to be the purpose of schooling? Why?

PART 1 QUESTIONS ON LANGUAGE IN GENERAL – Kurdish

- 1.1. Che zoanek ba zoani daiki xot azani? Bâtcha?
- 1.2. Ewa wa xanawadetan che zoangalek estefade akan la malow?

To elaborate:

Masalan la che zoangalek estefada akan la sharaiaatgal moxtalef la zndagi harrozhatan?

La che sheraiaatgalek zoani; kordi, Norwezhi/Sâedi language X ba kar ahenen? Hitch zoane has ka waxte ba kari teren fratr ehsasi rahati kan takia? Tche zoangalek wa bâtcha?

- 1.3. Ahamjati zoani sâedi bo ewa chas?

PART 2 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE

- 2.1. La mowredi zoan daiki xotan che fekrek akanow?
To elaborate:
Ahmjateki has bâtan? Che ahmjatek wa bâchi?
Nasartan la mowred zoani kordi la moqajsa tak zoani Norwezhi/Sâedi chas?
- 2.2. Atwanen bezhn ka hefzkerden wa parapejdani zoani daiki bâtan mâhem has ja nyja?
Bâcha?
- 2.3. Che zoanek ba zoani daiki mnalakatan azanen? Bâcha?
- 2.4. Ba nazar ewa, mnalakatan che didgajki has la mowred zoani kordiow?
To elaborate:
Mnalakatan zoani Sorani chon tmasha aka, che nazareki has la mowred zoani sorani?
- 2.5. Tawanmandigali mnalakatan la zoani kordi chån tâwsif akan? (Che tawanmandihajeki has?)
 - 2.5.1. Che ehsasektan la mowred amawo has?
To elaborate:
Agadarena la zoani korditan estefada kerda/akan la malo? ‘Eamdan le ktew, mosiqi, filmi kurdi estefada akan bâ taqwijatkrndi zoani sârani mnalakatan? Mnalakatan awan bâ djam’eagal ya kâbonawagali kordi?
 - 2.5.2. Bâtan mâhema ka mnalakatan zoani kordi fer bet wa bzanet? Bâcha?

PART 3 QUESTIONS ON MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION (tadriskrdni/ferkrdni zoan daiki)

- 3.1. La madrasai eptedaiia/sarataiia che frsatgale has bâ awaika mnalakatan zoani daiki fer be?
 - 3.1.1 Ewa lam frsatgala razi han? Bâcha?
To elaborate:

Ba nazar ewa, systemi amozeshi Norwezh arazogali ewa b  tadriskrdni zoan daiki b  mnalakatan barawarda akat?

Ewa haz akan hiche la systemi imroii tadriskrdni zoani daiki bg ren?

Ewa hich moshkle awinen la am chta?

- 3.3. Ba nazar ewa, awaika systemi amozeshi S ed aow frsata aat ka mnalakantam ka zoani daiki fer ben la madrasai eptedaija che arzsheki has?

Jane, am frsata che arzesheki has? Aya arzsheki has ja na?

La Notwezh, mnal xaridji haqi tadriskrdni zoan daiki has agar tawanai zoani norwezhi kam be. Madrasakan zoani daiki mnalaka estefada akan ba aow hadafa ka mnalaka zoani Norwezhi fer ben.

- 3.4. Nazartan chas la mowred ama?

- 3.5. Ba nazar ewa, tadriskrdni zoan daiki la madrasa ashe che hadafeke be?

- 3.6. Ba nazar ewa, klassi tadriskrdni zoan daiki atwanet hitch manfa'eateki be bo zndagi ajandai mnalakatan? Ch n?

If the parents have chosen MT classes in Kurdish for their children:

Mn zhneftema ka ba'eaze daiko bawke la s eda, zoani farsijan entexab krda b  mnalakanjan la klassi zoan daiki.

- 3.6.a. Nazartan chas la mowred am chta?

If the parents have chosen MT classes in Farsi for their children:

- 3.6.b. Ewa b cha zoani farsitan entexab krd b  mnalakatan, b cha korditan entexab nakrd?

PART 4 QUESTIONS ON SCHOOLING AND LANGUAGE

- 4.1. Akrje t ze la mowred awa qsa bkan ka ewa che taswirektan has la zndagi ajandai mnalakatan?

- 4.2. Ba nazar ewa wako daiko bawke ka mnaltan ha madrasa, tahsilkrdn che hadafeke has? B cha?

C.Information letter in Norwegian

Kjære foresatte,

Jeg skal denne høsten gjennomføre et masterstudie med tittelen “*Perceptions on the Value of Mother Tongue Instruction – A Comparative Case Study of the Norwegian and Swedish Education Systems from a User Perspective*”. Hensikten med dette studiet er å utforske hvilke synspunkter og holdninger Kurdiske flykningsforeldre har til morsmålsopplæring i Norge og Sverige. Gjennom prosjektet håper jeg å kunne bidra til en mer fullstendig forståelse av de ulike tilbudene sett i gjennom øynene til Kurdiske flykningsforeldre. Jeg tar nå kontakt med Dere med ønske om å kunne få samle inn Deres synspunkter på dette tema. Deres personlige erfaringer og holdninger vil være av avgjørende betydning for å oppnå hensikten med studiet.

Dersom Dere stiller som deltakere i prosjektet vil Deres bidrag bli samlet inn i form av individuelle intervjuer. Siktemålet med denne tilnærmingen er å kunne få en innholdsrik beskrive av ulike synspunkter og tolkninger. Dere kan melde ifra om deres interesse for deltakelse i prosjektet til morsmålslærer som vil videreformidle deres kontaktinformasjon til meg. På et senere tidspunkt vil Dere bli kontaktet av meg per telefon for å avtale en tid som passer for intervju. Samtalene vil finne sted i oktober måned og vil vare i ca 1 time. All informasjon vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og Dere kan til enhver tid trekke deg som informanter fra prosjektet. I så fall er det ønskelig at Dere gir beskjed så raskt som mulig. For øvrig er det bare å ta kontakt dersom det skulle være noen spørsmål.

Takk for at Dere vil bidra med deres erfaringer. Deres deltakelse i studiet vil være med på å utvide det pedagogiske kunnskapsfeltet.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Sahar Haji Hassani



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D. Information letter in Persian

والدین گرامی

من قصد دارم پاییز امسال پژوهشی در سطح کارشناسی ارشد را تحت عنوان ذیل به انجام برسانم: "دیدگاه ها در مورد اهمیت دادن به آموزش زبان مادری- مطالعه ی تطبیقی موردی در باره ی نظام های آموزشی سوئد و نروژ از دیدگاه کاربران"

هدف پژوهش بررسی مواضع و دیدگاه های والدین کرد پناهنده در مورد آموزش زبان مادری در کشورهای سوئد و نروژ می باشد. امیدوارم بتوانم از طریق این پروژه، براساس دیدگاه والدین کرد پناهنده، یاری رسان فهم کاملتری از تفاوت ها و تأثیرات چنین امکان آموزشی ای باشم. هم اکنون به این امید با شما تماس می گیرم که بتوانم نظرات و دیدگاه های شما را درباره ی این موضوع جمع آوری کنم. تجربیات و مواضع شخصی شما تأثیرگذاری اصلی بر شکل گیری پژوهش و دستیابی به هدف آن خواهد داشت.

حضور شما در این پروژه به شکل مصاحبه های فردی در نظر گرفته می شود. هدف از به کارگیری این شیوه، دستیابی به توضیح و تصویری جامع و مفصل است که همه ی باورها و دیدگاه ها را در خود جای داده باشد. برای سهیم شدن در این پروژه شما می توانید آمادگی خود را به معلم زبان مادری اعلام کنید تا مرا در جریان قرار دهد. سپس از طریق تماس تلفنی زمان مناسبی را برای گفت و گو مشخص می کنیم. گفت و گوها در ماه اکتبر به انجام می رسد و نزدیک به یک ساعت مصدع اوقات شما می شود. اطلاعات به دست آمده از شما به صورت سری باقی خواهد ماند و شما مختارید در هر مرحله ای از پروژه کناره گیری کنید؛ فقط تقاضا می شود در این حالت هرچه سریع تر مرا در جریان قرار دهید. همچنین در صورت داشتن هرگونه سؤالی می توانید با من تماس بگیرید.

از این که مرا در جریان تجربه های خودتان قرار می دهید بسیار سپاس گزارم. سهیم شدن شما در این پژوهش به رونق و گسترش علم پداگوژی کمک خواهد کرد.

با تشکر و احترام

سحر حاجی حسنی

دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد، رشته ی فلسفه ی آموزش و پرورش تطبیقی و بین المللی
دانشگاه اسلو، دانشکده ی علوم آموزشی

تلفن همراه (موبایل): ۰۰۴۷ ۹۳۴۹۲۸۷۵ +

ایمیل: saharhassani@live.no



E. Information letter in Kurdish

بنه‌ماله‌ی به‌ریز

من به نیازم که له پاییزی ئەم‌س‌ال‌دا تووژینه وه بیکی ماستیر به ئەنجام بگه‌یه‌ینم. ئە م تووژینه وه دیاری کراوه به سه رباسی: "روانگه‌کان بو گرینگ‌ی دان به فیرکردنی زمانی دایکی – لیکولینه وه ی ته تبیقی بابەتی لە‌نیوان سیستەمی پەرودەیی نوروژ و سوئید له روانگە‌ی کاربەرانه‌وه". مەبەستی ئەم لیکولینه‌وه، لیکدانەویکه سەبارەت بە‌وه‌ی که دایک و باوکە کورده پەنا‌بەرەکان چ بو‌چوون و هە‌لو‌بستێکیان دەر‌بەرە‌ی فیرکردنی زمانی دایکی له نوروژ و سوئید هه‌یه. به‌ه‌یو‌اشم که له ریگای ئەم پرۆژیکته‌وه بتوانم به پیی بو‌چوونی دایک و باوکە کورده‌کان یارمەتیدەر بم بۆ تیگە‌شتنێکی کامیلتر له جیاوازی و کاریگەریی ئەو خزمەتگوزارییه. ئیستا من پێ‌وه‌ندی به ئیوه‌وه ده‌کم و ه‌یوادارم که بتوانم بو‌چوونه‌کانی ئیوه دەر‌بەرە‌ی ئەم بابەته‌ کۆ بکه‌مه‌وه. ته‌جروبه و هە‌لو‌بستە‌کانی هەر‌کام له ئیوه کاریگەریی ته‌واوی له پێ‌کان و به ئەنجام گه‌یشتنی ئەم لیکولینه‌وه‌یه ده‌بێت.

ئەگەر ئیوه لەم پرۆژە‌دا بە‌شداری بکه‌ن، خزمەتە‌که‌ی ئیوه به شیوه‌ی گفتوگۆی تاکه‌ که‌سی و وتووێژی به کۆمە‌ل له گە‌ل بە‌شداریانی دیکه‌ کۆ ده‌کرێته‌وه. مەبەستی لەو شیوازی کۆ‌کردنه‌وه‌یه، ده‌سکه‌وتنی شهرح و وێنه‌یکی تیروته‌سه‌له، که توانیبه‌تی هه‌موو بو‌چوون و روانگه‌کان له خویدا کۆ بکاته‌وه. ئیوه ده‌توانن ئاماده‌یی خۆتان بۆ بە‌شداریبوون لهو پرۆژه‌یه به مامۆستای زمانی دایکی رابگه‌یه‌ینن تا ئه‌ویش من ئاگادار بکاته‌وه. دواتر منیش له ریگای ته‌له‌فون‌ه‌وه پێ‌وه‌ندیان له‌گە‌ل ده‌گرم و کاتیکی گونجاو بۆ گفتوگۆ‌کردن دیاری ده‌که‌ین. وتووێژه‌کان له مانگی ئۆکتوبردا به‌ریوه ده‌چن و له‌وانه‌یه سه‌عاتیک کاتتان بگریت. هه‌موو زانیاریه‌ک نه‌ینی ده‌مینێته‌وه، ئیوه‌ش وه‌کوو بە‌شدار ده‌توانن هەر کاتیک که پێتان خۆش بێت خۆتان له پرۆژه‌که بکێشنه‌وه. له هەر حاڵدا تکایه به‌زووترین کات ئاگادارم بکه‌نه‌وه. هه‌روه‌ها ئەگەر پرس‌یار‌یک‌یشتان هه‌بوو، تکایه په‌یوه‌ندیم پێ‌وه بگرن.

زۆر سپاس بۆ ئە‌وه‌ی که به ته‌جروبه‌کانی خۆتان یارمەتیمان ده‌دن. بە‌شداری ئیوه لهو لیکولینه‌وه‌یه‌دا خزمەت به‌گه‌شه‌دار بوون و به‌رفراوان‌کردنی گۆر‌پانی زانستی پێ‌داگۆگی ده‌کات.

له گە‌ل ریز و س‌لاومدا

سه‌حەر حاجی‌حسنی

خوێندکاری ماستر؛ فیلۆسۆفی له پەرودەر‌ده و باره‌ینانی ته‌تبیقی و نێونه‌ته‌وه‌یی
زانکۆی ئۆسلو، زانێستگه‌ی زانستی خوێندکاری
مۆبایل: + ٤٧ ٩٣٤٩٢٨٧٥
saharhassani@live.no مایل:



F. Informed consent form for Norwegian participants

Forespørsel om deltakelse i masterstudiet:

“Perceptions on the Value of Mother Tongue Instruction: A Comparative Case Study of the Norwegian and Swedish Education Systems from a User Perspective”

Jeg heter Sahar Haji Hassani og er masterstudent ved Universitetet i Oslo. Denne høsten utfører jeg et studie om hva verdien av morsmålsopplæring er i Norge og Sverige sett igjennom øynene til kurdiske flyktningeforeldre. Studiet vil bli utført av undertegnede med støtte fra veileder Kristin Vold Lexander ved Universitetet i Oslo.

Hensikten med studiet er å utforske og sammenlikne hvilke synspunkter og holdninger kurdiske flyktningeforeldre har til morsmålsopplæring i Norge og Sverige. Over det siste tiåret har morsmålsopplæring og studietilbudet for minoritetsspråklige i Norge vært et svært sentralt tema i den norske skoledebatten. Per dags dato finnes det derimot lite informasjon om disse temaene sett fra et forbruker perspektiv. Formålet med dette studiet er å kunne bidra med slik informasjon gjennom en sammenlikning av forholdene i Norge og Sverige. De mest sentrale momentene i studiet vil være kurdiske flyktningeforeldres behov og oppfatninger om tilbudet om morsmålsopplæring i skolesystemet.

Du og din partner har blitt invitert til å delta i studiet på bakgrunn av deres erfaringer som kurdiske flyktningeforeldre med barn som er født og oppvokst i Norge. Deres personlige erfaringer, oppfatninger og behov vil være av svært stor betydning for dette studiet så vel som for berikelsen av det utdanningsvitenskapelige forskningsfeltet.

Din deltakelse vil være i form av et intervju mellom deg, din partner og meg. Intervjuet vil vare mellom en til to timer hvor det vil bli foretatt lydopptak.

Det er frivillig å delta i studiet og du har til enhver tid mulighet til å trekke deg som informant uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Din identitet vil i enhver sammenheng være vernet. Kun jeg og min veileder vil ha tilgang til personidentifiserbare data. Vi er underlagt taushetsplikt slik at all informasjon vil bli behandlet strengt konfidensielt.

Informasjonen du oppgir vil bli presentert i en oppgave på ca 80 sider og i eventuelle artikler jeg vil publisere i etterkant. Studiet forventes å være ferdig august 2013. Når studiet er avsluttet vil all informasjon bli anonymisert.

Studiet har blitt godkjent av Universitetet i Oslo og er meldt til Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste og Personvernombudet for forskning.

Dersom du har noen spørsmål kan du stille dem nå eller i etterkant.

Med vennlig hilsen
Sahar Haji Hassani

Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet,
Universitetet i Oslo
Mobil + 47 934 92 875, mail saharhassani@live.no.

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg er kjent med studiets formål og hva min deltakelse i prosjektet vil innebære.

Jeg er innforstått med at min identitet vil være vernet til enhver tid og at informasjonen jeg oppgir vil bli presentert i en oppgave på ca 80 sider og i eventuelle artikler som kan publisere i etterkant.

Jeg er informert om at mitt samtykke for deltakelse er frivillig og at jeg til enhver tid har rett til å trekke mitt samtykke.

Jeg har mottatt, lest og er innforstått med den foregående informasjonen. Jeg samtykker herved til å delta som informant for dette studiet

Navn i blokkbokstaver

Signatur

Dato

G. Informed consent form for Swedish participants

Forespørsel om deltakelse i masterstudiet:

“Perceptions on the Value of Mother Tongue Instruction: A Comparative Case Study of the Norwegian and Swedish Education Systems from a User Perspective”

Jeg heter Sahar Haji Hassani og er masterstudent ved Universitetet i Oslo. Denne høsten utfører jeg et studie om hva verdien av morsmålsopplæring er i Norge og Sverige sett igjennom øynene til kurdiske flyktningeforeldre. Studiet vil bli utført av undertegnede med støtte fra veileder Kristin Vold Lexander ved Universitetet i Oslo.

Hensikten med studiet er å utforske og sammenlikne hvilke synspunkter og holdninger kurdiske flyktningeforeldre har til morsmålsopplæring i Norge og Sverige. Over det siste tiåret har morsmålsopplæring og studietilbudet for minoritetsspråklige i Norge vært et svært sentralt tema i skoledebatten. Per dags dato finnes det derimot lite informasjon om disse temaene sett fra et forbruker perspektiv. Formålet med dette studiet er å kunne bidra med slik informasjon gjennom en sammenlikning av forholdene i Norge og Sverige. De mest sentrale momentene i studiet vil være kurdiske flyktningeforeldres behov og oppfatninger om tilbudet om morsmålsopplæring i skolesystemet.

Du og din partner har blitt invitert til å delta i studiet på bakgrunn av deres erfaringer som kurdiske flyktningeforeldre med barn som er født og oppvokst i Sverige. Deres personlige erfaringer, oppfatninger og behov vil være av svært stor betydning for dette studiet så vel som for berikelsen av det utdanningsvitenskapelige forskningsfeltet.

Din deltakelse vil være i form av et intervju mellom deg, din partner og meg. Intervjuet vil vare mellom en til to timer hvor det vil bli foretatt lydopptak.

Det er frivillig å delta i studiet og du har til enhver tid mulighet til å trekke deg som informant uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Din identitet vil i enhver sammenheng være vernet. Kun jeg og min veileder vil ha tilgang til personidentifiserbare data. Vi er underlagt taushetsplikt slik at all informasjon vil bli behandlet strengt konfidensielt.

Informasjonen du oppgir vil bli presentert i en oppgave på ca 80 sider og i eventuelle artikler jeg vil publisere i etterkant. Studiet forventes å være ferdig august 2013. Når studiet er avsluttet vil all informasjon bli anonymisert.

Studiet har blitt godkjent av Universitetet i Oslo og er meldt til Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste og Personvernombudet for forskning.

Dersom du har noen spørsmål kan du stille dem nå eller i etterkant.

Med vennlig hilsen
Sahar Haji Hassani

Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet,
Universitetet i Oslo
Mobil + 47 934 92 875, mail saharhassani@live.no.

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg er kjent med studiets formål og hva min deltakelse i prosjektet vil innebære.

Jeg er innforstått med at min identitet vil være vernet til enhver tid og at informasjonen jeg oppgir vil bli presentert i en oppgave på ca 80 sider og i eventuelle artikler som kan publisere i etterkant.

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